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General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
2nd meeting
Monday, 3 October 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Choi Young jin ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Expression of sympathy in connection with the terrorist bombings in Bali, Indonesia

The Chairman: Before we proceed with our work, allow me, in my capacity as presiding officer of the First Committee, to make a brief comment on the terrorist attack that occurred on 1 October in Bali, Indonesia. I should like to say that our sympathy and prayers are with the victims of the terrorist attack and with their families.

Introductory statements

The Chairman: This morning, the First Committee, in accordance with its programme of work and timetable, will begin its general debate on all disarmament and related international security agenda items.

It is an honour and a privilege for me to chair the First Committee at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. As Chairman of this important Committee, I will spare no effort to bring its deliberations to a successful conclusion. However, that can only be achieved with the full support and cooperation of each and every delegation. In that regard, the constructive engagement of all members, based on a spirit of harmony and compromise, is needed more than anything else if we are to enjoy a fruitful outcome to our nearly five-week-long deliberations.

It is no secret that there is a prevailing sense of crisis nowadays in terms of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation. That has been brought on by the continuation of a long stalemate and by a lack of progress due to sharp divisions in perceptions and perspectives among us. The most important disarmament mechanisms — including the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) — are all now at an impasse. The situation has not been improved by the failure to negotiate a disarmament and non-proliferation section to the outcome document of September's High-level Plenary Meeting.

Against that backdrop, many desire this year's First Committee session to bring a glimmer of hope that we might break that impasse and reinvigorate the multilateral processes of disarmament and non-proliferation. Those mechanisms are too important to be left in limbo indefinitely. The issues that we are dealing with in the Committee will have far-reaching and long-lasting implications for national, regional and global security. I share the view that at this juncture the First Committee should play a leading role in galvanizing the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation processes. I will do my best to achieve that invaluable goal. In doing so, I count on the support and cooperation of the Committee.

It is now my pleasure to give the floor to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Mr. Abe (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): I am grateful for this opportunity once again to address the members of the First Committee as it begins its work on the important agenda before it. I should first like to extend my personal congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, upon your election to guide the work of the Committee. I also wish to extend my appreciation to the other members of the Bureau and to assure them all of the fullest cooperation and support from the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Department for General Assembly and Conference Management. My colleagues and I look forward to providing whatever assistance may be required to ensure that this will be an efficient and productive session.

We meet at a particularly difficult and challenging moment for disarmament and non-proliferation. It is a time of heightened global anxiety about weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and I believe that it is our responsibility, even more than is normally the case, to use this session to promote and strengthen the various multilateral efforts to reduce or eliminate the threat they pose. However, it can be a secret to no one in this room that collectively we are at present signally stumbling in our efforts to meet that challenge. The recent world summit demonstrated that States could not agree on the way forward on disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. I believe that the words of the Secretary-General both perfectly encapsulate the nature of the problem and set it in its wider context. In his address to the world summit, he said,

> "Twice this year — at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, and now at this summit — we have allowed posturing to get in the way of results. That is inexcusable. Weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger to us all, particularly in a world threatened by terrorists with global ambitions and no inhibitions. We must pick up the pieces in order to renew negotiations on that vital issue". (*A/60/PV.1, p. 5*)

I will also quote from the letter the President of the General Assembly, Jan Eliasson, wrote to all Permanent Representatives on 30 September. That was just last Friday, so members may not yet have seen it. He wrote,

> "The document should not set a limit on our ambitions; rather, it should be a beachhead from which we launch ourselves forward. We should recognize that it does not incorporate all that many of you wanted. There are some areas which the document does not address in detail where many would rightly like to see progress during the sixtieth session. One such area is disarmament and non-proliferation, on which I would encourage new and creative thinking in all appropriate forums".

It falls in some large measure to this Committee to begin that task of trying to pick up the pieces and to provide fresh orientations. You, the members, are expected to provide guidance about the way in which the Conference on Disarmament might address the long-awaited negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as well as on such issues as negative security assurances, outer space and the fundamental question of complete nuclear disarmament. You may consider what practical steps we may take to ensure the continuing health and strength of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

It is too important a matter for us to stand idle. The urgent international concern about the imminent proliferation risk is still there. Nuclear warheads still number in the thousands. It was therefore very encouraging to note that the Foreign Ministers of Australia, Chile, Indonesia, Norway, Romania, South Africa and the United Kingdom took the initiative to seek a consensus in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in preparation for the world summit. I am encouraged to note that some Member States, for example, Norway, out of concern about the current critical state of affairs, have expressed their willingness to continue their efforts to seek a new consensus. In this connection, I note that the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) was held immediately following the world summit in New York to reaffirm the determination to bring the CTBT into force and to underline its importance for world disarmament and non-proliferation.

In implementing the agreements reached at last year's session, the First Committee has invited a number of experts to the thematic discussion on substantive issues. International treaty organizations as well as Chairpersons of the United Nations disarmament bodies will participate as well, with a

view to promoting interactive discussions in the Committee. This is a new attempt, and the Secretariat will be open to further suggestions. Representatives of civil society — for example, the Middle Powers Initiative and the Mayors for Peace — have expressed their intention to engage in the debates with members of the First Committee. Through these occasions, members may sense the outside temperature and broaden this perspectives.

Biological and chemical weapons also remain major items on our agenda, because of their potentially massive and indiscriminate effects. The year 2005 has seen important anniversaries, such as that of the Geneva Protocol of 1925, which first sought to ban both classes of weapon, and the 1975 entry into force of the Biological Weapons Convention. Many will already be looking ahead to the sixth Review Conference of the Biological Weapons Convention, to be held in 2006, and hoping that it can successfully map the way ahead. The real challenge here remains that of bringing these treaties closer to universality and securing full and effective compliance.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs is not sitting idly by as concern increases regarding the threat of terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction. It is assisting the Committee established pursuant to Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). With the help of a group of experts, the Committee is currently examining the national reports submitted by Member States. There are many measures to be taken to establish domestic laws and regulations, to criminalize activities concerning proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) to non-State actors and to establish and tighten export and border controls. Furthermore, the Committee is actively pursuing outreach activities and assistance in cooperation with willing Member States.

The preponderant focus on the WMD threat should not lessen our attention to matters relating to regulation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces. Despite the fact that much progress has been made by the international community to address the problem of illicit small arms and light weapons, their proliferation continues to pose a serious threat to peace and security in too many regions of the world. It is too easily overlooked that conventional weapons continue to kill many thousands of people every year. These are often everyday tragedies that are rarely reported but which bring human misery and suffering in their wake. I look forward to the Committee taking action for the early and effective implementation of the draft international instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons, and I look forward to the Committee providing direction for the way forward for subsequent work.

On a related matter, members will recall that there will be a meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2006 Conference to Review Progress Made in Implementation of the Programme of Action. The Review Conference itself will be held from 26 June to 7 July 2006, and the Preparatory Committee will meet from 9 to 20 January 2006. It is my understanding that the African Group is to nominate the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, while the Asian non-group will provide the Chairman for the Review Conference. Given the time factor, it would be greatly appreciated if the groups concerned could nominate the respective Chairmen as soon as possible so that the Secretariat may begin working earnestly on the preparations for these meetings.

May I now draw attention to another part of the world summit outcome document (resolution 60/1), paragraph 146, which states

> "We reaffirm our commitment to strengthen the United Nations with a view to enhancing its authority and efficiency, as well as its capacity to address effectively, and in accordance with the purposes and principles of its Charter, the full range of challenges of our time. We are determined to reinvigorate the intergovernmental organs of the United Nations and to adapt them to the needs of the twenty-first century".

That is exactly what the First Committee has been striving for. I recall the intensive discussions we had last year on how to improve the effectiveness of the work of the Committee. The summit has given renewed emphasis to such efforts and we therefore look forward to the Committee's continued efforts towards this goal.

I remember addressing the question of economizing and making effective use of the reports prepared by the Secretariat in compliance with resolutions of the General Assembly. I shall have an opportunity to report on that matter later during the proceedings.

The Department for Disarmament Affairs has also been reviewing the work of our three regional

centres — in Latin America and the Caribbean; in Africa; and in Asia and the Pacific — with a view of better serving Member States. I shall continue my consultations with many delegations in the weeks ahead.

All delegations will have received this morning, at their Missions and on their desks, a copy of the 2004 edition of the *United Nations Disarmament Yearbook*. The *Yearbook* is a centrepiece of the Department's information programme. It contains condensed background information on the annual activities of the United Nations in the field of disarmament. Pursuant to the request of the General Assembly, made last year, that the Department use more electronic means to disseminate information, the Department, for the first time, will soon post an electronic version in English of the 2004 *Yearbook* on its website, as well as electronic archive versions in English of the 2002 and 2003 *Yearbooks*. An announcement will be made when the Web site is ready for use.

Although the work ahead for the Committee will, I am sure, at times be difficult, I hope that we can collectively try to raise our sights and our aspirations in order to try to move beyond current preoccupations in order to address properly the fundamental problems that are of concern to us all. I believe, above all, that we owe a duty to those many millions of people outside this room who ultimately look to us and to this Organization to guide and light the way ahead.

Please, therefore, accept my very best wishes for an effective, successful and productive session.

Agenda items 85 to 105

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

The Chairman: Before calling on the first speaker in the general debate, I should like to discuss a couple of organizational matters. First, the speakers' list will close at 6 p.m. tomorrow, and I urge delegations to place their names on the list before the deadline. It is a rolling list, so delegations may be requested to speak earlier than anticipated.

Secondly, we have agreed to limit our statements to between seven and 10 minutes for those speaking their national capacity and to 10 to 15 minutes for those speaking on behalf of several delegations. The "traffic light" will remain green for the first seven minutes for those speaking in their national capacity and for 10 minutes for those speaking for several delegations. Then it will turn yellow to remind speakers that it is time to wrap up their remarks.

Mr. Mayoral (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): First and foremost, Mr. Chairman, I would like to echo the condolences you addressed to the people and the Government of Indonesia with respect to this weekend's attacks.

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Rio Group, composed of Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela and my own country, Argentina.

The Rio Group is convinced that multilateralism is the only way to maintain international peace and security and that a common effort by all States to agree collectively on instruments and mechanisms will lead us to guarantee mutual security. We continue to be pioneers in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation because we are convinced of its importance for international peace and security. That is why we note with a degree of perplexity that the outcome document of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting (resolution 60/1) does not include reference to the issue of disarmament and international security.

At the same time, today, more than 30 years after adoption of the Treaty of Tlatelolco, the Rio Group is pleased that the States parties to that Treaty were in the vanguard with respect to convening the first Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zones. At that Conference, held in Tlatelolco, Mexico, from 26 to 28 April 2005, the Tlatelolco Declaration was adopted. It warns of the threat that the continued existence of nuclear weapons represents for humanity and stresses the importance of the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency in verifying that nuclear energy is used exclusively for peaceful purposes.

We are especially worried about the crisis of the United Nations disarmament machinery as a whole. The Conference on Disarmament and now also the Disarmament Commission are blocked due to the lack of political will to agree on a balanced agenda that includes the issue of nuclear disarmament.

It is with that concern in mind that the Rio Group regrets the failure of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, held last May. The lack of agreement on the adoption of a document that could reflect existing challenges alerts us to the efforts that still have to be made on the three pillars of the regime: disarmament, non-proliferation and the exclusively peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In this regard, we reaffirm the validity of the 13 practical steps agreed upon at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, in particular the call to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the immediate commencement of negotiations in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament of a fissile material cut-off convention and the establishment of an organ with a mandate to address nuclear disarmament.

In this context, the Rio Group takes note of the initiative on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation presented by a group of seven countries, led by Norway. This initiative could be a first step in renewing the commitment of all Member States to this issue.

Indeed, general and complete disarmament is a crucial tool that should be used to reduce political asymmetry and bolster the international order on the basis of the principle of the sovereign equality of all States. Moreover, it is in the common interest of all peoples not to live with the threat of weapons of mass destruction. The strengthening of international peace and security and the promotion of general and complete disarmament complement and reinforce each other. The strengthening of the non-proliferation regime should be accompanied by access to technology by States that fully comply with their international obligations.

The international community has also been and remains committed to the elimination of chemical and biological weapons, and to the early conclusion of a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention. In this regard, the Rio Group will continue working actively for strict compliance in good faith with the obligations contained in all instruments dealing with disarmament and with the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We advocate their universalization as a goal to be met in the first decade of the twenty-first century, because that is the only way it will be possible to lay the foundation for mutually assured security — our paramount objective.

In the multilateral disarmament and security system, confidence-building measures have taken the form of mechanisms for the exchange of information within the framework of certain instruments, such as a system for the standardized reporting of information on military expenditures and the Register of Conventional Arms. The Rio Group has played an active role in the promotion of these and other more advanced confidence-building measures, both generally, and, in particular, within our region, to achieve the integrated economic, social and political development of our peoples.

The excessive accumulation of conventional weapons, in particular small arms and light weapons, is both a consequence of tension and conflict and a cause of their exacerbation or prolongation. It also contributes to high crime rates. The Rio Group welcomes the holding of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider Implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and renews its commitment to the full implementation of the Programme's recommendations. The Rio Group strongly believes that Member States should use the July 2006 Review Conference as an opportunity to strengthen that instrument through the inclusion of such issues as those related to arms transfers. At the same time, the Rio Group would like to express its profound disappointment at Member States' lack of determination to adopt a strong, legally binding instrument on marking and tracing. We regret once again that it was not possible to obtain a clear commitment to move forward to combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

Our region possesses a legally binding instrument, the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials. Although the Rio Group is committed to the draft instrument negotiated last June by the Working Group on marking and tracing, we cannot but highlight that it was a very modest contribution to addressing what is quite simply an illicit activity, and we will continue working to achieve a legally binding instrument.

The problem of anti-personnel mines is far from being solved, but at least the international community has sought a global response through the Ottawa

Convention. That is why the countries of the Rio Group have proposed that, in the framework of the Organization of American States (OAS), the hemisphere should become a zone free of anti-personnel mines. The Rio Group will continue to work arduously in order to make possible this objective, together with cooperation in demining and victim assistance, because these are fundamental and complementary aspects of alleviating suffering and opening the way to development.

We are going through a time of transition that is resulting in adaptation and redefinition in the light of new international conditions. Together, we must all maintain a dialogue and consult so as to contribute in a positive way to narrowing differences on the design of a future global security system.

That is how the Rio Group understands it, and, for that reason, we would like to stress that the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean has once again met expectation with regard to the proposed objectives. We congratulate its Director and his team, and we urge countries in a position to do so to contribute financially to the Lima Centre so that it can continue making progress in the implementation of its programmes.

Before concluding, we express our recognition and gratitude to the outgoing Chairman of the First Committee, Ambassador Alfonso de Alba, the representative of a State member of the Rio Group.

We hope that this First Committee session will be fruitful. For that purpose, Mr. Chairman, you can count on the full cooperation of my country and of all the other Rio Group countries.

Mr. De Alba (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Sir, I take pleasure in extending our most sincere congratulations to you on your election to the chairmanship. Allow me to assure you that you will have our fullest support throughout the Committee's work. I also wish to clearly state our support for the statement just delivered by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group, including what he had to say with regard to the events in Indonesia.

The General Assembly is the most democratic and representative of United Nations organs; the countries gathered here must continue to promote its full revitalization. Last year we agreed upon reforms that will allow us to make more efficient use of the time and resources allocated to the First Committee. We also opened the door to a more productive, focused and transparent discussion. There is no doubt, however, that much remains to be done to achieve not only greater efficiency, but greater effectiveness. Indeed, greater effectiveness is what we need above all.

Recognizing that our working methods were obsolescent was only the first step in reform. Abandoning the negotiating patterns developed during the cold war must be the next. Disagreements between the contesting Powers of that time has merely been replaced today by disagreement among countries that are supposed to share fundamental values and objectives. Thus, extreme positions — not shared by the great majority of Member States — continue to dominate the multilateral disarmament agenda, resulting only in paralysis. It is ironic that while threats to peace and international security grow in their dimensions and sophistication, trust in multilateral action — which is more than ever necessary to confront those threats effectively — seems to diminish proportionally.

Mexico stresses that nuclear disarmament is not an option; it is a legal obligation. That is why we deeply regret both the breakdown of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the failure at the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to agree on issues of disarmament and non-proliferation, which meant that those issues were not addressed in its recommendations. An extremely valuable opportunity was lost. Those failures compound the problems that have been facing the institutional disarmament machinery for a number of years now — notably, the intolerable deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and the abuse of the consensus rule that continues to block the adoption of a programme of work for that forum. That is why we feel the time has come to search for alternative approaches to move the Conference's agenda forward.

Mexico confirms its unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects and deems it imperative to pursue efforts towards the total and definitive elimination of nuclear arsenals. It seems incredible that in the twenty-first century the world continues, as it did 60 years ago, to live under the nuclear threat and with uncertainty that treaties are being complied with. In 1945, we

witnessed the barbarity of nuclear war and its devastating effects on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. That dreadful holocaust sparked a virtually universal awareness of the imperative of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Yet today there are still more than 30,000 nuclear warheads with inconceivable destructive potential. The nuclear option has been retained as a key element in the security strategies of certain countries, including against States that do not posses such weapons. Worse still, such weapons continue to be developed.

That is why, today more than ever, we demand that it is high time to destroy nuclear arsenals and to implement measures that will forestall any chance of those truly inhuman weapons being used. We must not forget that what does not exist cannot proliferate, and that, so long as there are stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, so, too, will the possibility exist of their being used or of their falling into the hands of non-State actors. Together with Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden and South Africa — members of the New Agenda Coalition — and with the backing of the vast majority of United Nations Member States, we shall continue to systematically reject the delusion that nuclear weapons can be stored without their ever being used, by accident or deliberately, and we will continue to press the point that the only acceptable guarantee against such eventualities lies in their total elimination. We also reaffirm that the 13 practical steps on nuclear disarmament adopted in 2000, as well as the unequivocal commitment of nuclear-weapon States to fulfil them, are fully valid today.

Mexico is optimistic about the understanding reached on 19 September in Beijing in the framework of the six-party talks, through which the parties have worked to agree on measures that would make it possible to move towards the goal of a denuclearized Korean peninsula.

However, Mexico is concerned by certain actions that run counter to the spirit of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We stress the importance of having NPT States parties, including, in particular, the Islamic Republic of Iran, offer clear-cut guarantees that they are using nuclear energy for peaceful purposes and in strict compliance with nuclear safeguards. We also emphasize the need to avoid politicization in cases that can be resolved within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency. By the same token, Mexico is concerned that in a recent nuclear cooperation agreement for civilian purposes between India and the United States no consideration was given to the principle of universalizing the NPT, and that, to the contrary, such an agreement was reached with a State not party to the Treaty.

In 2004, at this very forum, we announced the convening of a Conference of the States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. Today, we join the representative of the Rio Group in celebrating the successful outcome of that event. Mexico affirms its commitment to support the agreements reached there in favour of greater cooperation among nuclear-weapon-free zones with a view to strengthening and consolidating them.

Finally, I would point out that Mexico is advancing a number of initiatives to strengthen the Programme of Action adopted in 2001 within the framework of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We believe that at the 2006 Review Conference we will need to address elements that will complement and enhance the Programme of Action. In that regard, Mexico regrets the limited reach of the draft instrument on the identification and tracing of illicit small arms and light weapons, as well as the fact that it is not legally binding.

I wish finally to stress that my country will continue to promote the universalization of the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines and the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009, with the aim of preserving the humanitarian perspective of the Convention, in addition to supporting efforts to establish an anti-personnel-landmine-free zone.

Mr. Freeman (United Kingdom): I am speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU) and the acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania. The candidate countries Turkey and Croatia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro, and the European Free Trade Association country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this declaration.

The European Union is deeply committed to the United Nations, to upholding and developing

international law and to effective multilateralism. The work of the First Committee on disarmament and international security is a critical element within the United Nations, reflecting its primary aim of removing the scourge of war from our world. The work of the Committee must reflect the most pressing contemporary challenges of our interdependent world. That is why the European Union has been very committed to the revitalization of the First Committee and joins those who stress the importance of the implementation of the principles all of us agreed to last year. In my statement, I would like to focus on the key interdependent challenges we all face, which we will expand on later in more specific interventions.

This year has been an important one for the United Nations. We are celebrating its sixtieth anniversary, and we meet here only weeks after the 2005 world summit. As the Secretary-General said at the summit, we live in a world in which we all benefit from collective security and all suffer when it is lacking. Development, security and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing. International security also depends upon social development, the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), environmental sustainability and the promotion of international trade.

Positive steps on peace and security were taken at the summit. We welcome the agreement to establish a Peacebuilding Commission — one of the EU's priorities — to break the cycle of conflict that afflicts so many parts of the world. For the first time, the United Nations will have a single forum in which the wider international community, including regional political players, donors and the international financial institutions, can come together to assist countries emerging from conflict. We hope that that will reduce further violence, with its huge human and financial costs. Getting the Commission established by the 31 December 2005 deadline is a top EU objective for this autumn.

We also strongly welcome the agreement on the responsibility to protect. International recognition that we cannot stand by as the very worst atrocities — including genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity — are committed, is an important step forward for peace and security and for the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century. It is a recognition that the world in which we now live is too small for us to be unaffected by, or indifferent to, the innocent victims of murder and oppression. The European Union is committed to playing its part. Today, the European Union is on the ground as military, police or civilian presence, in Bosnia, Aceh, Iraq, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and — with the African Union — in Darfur.

There were some significant steps forward on terrorism at the summit. The EU strongly endorses Security Council resolution 1624 (2005), adopted by the Council during the summit, urging all States to make incitement of terrorism illegal and to combat extremist ideologies. We also welcome the condemnation of terrorism at the summit, and strongly support the call for urgent action to develop the Secretary-General's counter-terrorism strategy. We should now commit ourselves to concluding and agreeing upon the draft of a comprehensive convention on international terrorism, including a legal definition of terrorist acts, during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

However, there were also setbacks at the summit. The European Union regrets that no consensus on non-proliferation and disarmament language in the outcome document was reached. We agree with the Secretary-General that that was a considerable disappointment. It comes in a year in which, regrettably, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was not able to agree upon a substantive outcome. We believe that the international community must take responsibility and address the serious threat posed to peace and security by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We recognize that that outcome requires due reflection from us all. The European Union worked tirelessly on the basis of a common position, at both the NPT Review Conference and the summit, to make progress on those and related issues, including disarmament and peaceful uses. We will continue that work in all the relevant international forums, including this Committee, over the coming weeks.

As expressed in the European Union's Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass destruction, we are convinced that a multilateral approach to non-proliferation provides the best means of countering that threat to international security. As we said in our 2003 Common Position on multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation, we support the universal ratification of, and adherence to, the NPT,

the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, as well as the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Those key instruments provide a basis for the international community's disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. They contribute to international confidence, stability and peace, including the fight against terrorism.

The NPT continues to be the cornerstone of the global non-proliferation regime, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament in accordance with its article VI, and an important element in the further development of nuclear energy applications for peaceful purposes. The Treaty is as vital as ever. We continue to defend that consensus, on the basis of the framework established by the NPT, by supporting the decisions and the resolution adopted at the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, and we will bear in mind the current situation. We note also that the final report, which includes the programme of work, adopted by consensus at the 2005 NPT Review Conference, constitutes a reference for the future review process in which the European Union will engage, on the basis of its Common Position. We also continue to work towards universal accession to the NPT and call on those States not yet parties to it to join the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States.

The European Union considers that comprehensive safeguards agreements, together with additional protocols, constitute the current verification standard of the International Atomic Energy Agency and are the essential means for States parties to demonstrate that they are fulfilling their obligations under the NPT. We support the strengthening of the role of the Security Council as the final arbiter of international peace and security in order that it can take appropriate action in the event of non-compliance with NPT obligations.

The European Union places the utmost importance on the earliest possible entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty to prohibit all nuclear-weapon test explosions and other nuclear explosions. We reaffirmed our commitment to the CTBT with our support for the final declaration, delivered on behalf of the ratifiers and States signatory of the Treaty at the conclusion of the recent article XIV review conference, held here in New York. We also continue to call for the immediate commencement and early conclusion of negotiations, at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, of a non-discriminatory, universally applicable treaty to ban the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, without preconditions, and bearing in mind the Special Coordinator's report (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein. We are concerned about the continuing inability of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work and begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The Iranian nuclear programme continues to be a matter of grave concern for the European Union. The EU strongly supports the efforts of France, Germany and the United Kingdom, in association with the European Union's High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, to find an acceptable agreement to rebuild international confidence in Iran's intentions. We recognize the inalienable right of NPT parties to develop research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with articles I and II of the NPT. However, maintaining the balance between rights and obligations envisaged in the Treaty is essential. We believe that it is incumbent on a non-compliant State to return to full compliance and to build the necessary confidence in the exclusively peaceful nature of its nuclear activities, in the specific case of Iran through the suspension of fissile material production and enrichment-related activities.

The resolution adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors on 24 September, finding Iran non-compliant with its obligations under the NPT but deferring the report to the Security Council, gives Iran an opportunity now to address the clear concerns of the international community. The European side, for its part, is prepared to resume negotiations within the framework agreed between the Europeans and Iran last November. It is only when Iran demonstrates beyond any doubt that it is not seeking a nuclear-weapons capability that it will be able to develop a better relationship with Europe and with the international community as a whole.

We welcome the joint statement made by the participants in the six-party talks on 19 September and recognize the hard work, flexibility and cooperation shown by those participants. We note in particular the

renewal of the commitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon nuclear weapons and all existing nuclear programmes and its undertaking to return to the NPT. However, the European Union considers the nuclear-weapons programmes of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to be a serious violation of its commitments under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, its International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement, the Agreed Framework between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the Joint North-South Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We continue to deplore the stated intention of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to withdraw from the NPT and urge the adoption of measures to deal with withdrawal from the Treaty. The European Union has supported the six-party talks throughout the process, and remains ready to assist in whatever way it can.

International treaty regimes and export-control arrangements have made an important contribution over many years to preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction and associated delivery systems. However, we have entered a new and particularly dangerous period that raises the possibility of a weapons-of-mass-destruction arms race and of acquisition by non-State actors. The European Security Strategy of 2003 highlighted the threat posed by terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The illicit trade related to weapons of mass destruction, in particular in highly sensitive nuclear equipment and technology, is of serious concern, and we must be united in a common endeavour to strengthen the non-proliferation regime by closing existing loopholes. The European Union is committed to strong national and internationally coordinated export controls to complement our obligations under the NPT. We also strongly support the important non-proliferation measures within Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) to prevent the illicit traffic in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. States must continue that vital work. In addition, we support and encourage States to participate in the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials; the Proliferation Security Initiative — the Krakow Initiative; the Global Threat Reduction Initiative; and to continue to support the work of the G-8 Global Partnership.

The European Union is convinced that an arms race in outer space should be prevented given the international community's increased involvement in space-based activities aimed at global development and progress. Such prevention is an essential condition for the strengthening of strategic stability and for the promotion of international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The European Union believes that the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has an essential role in countering the threat of chemical weapons and urges States that are not parties to it adhere to that treaty. The Chemical Weapons Convention is a unique disarmament and non-proliferation instrument that must be strictly applied. We are equally supportive of the Organization that is ensuring the implementation of the CWC and compliance with its demands — the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The EU also believes the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) has an essential role in countering the threat of biological weapons and urges States that are not parties to it adhere to it. In 2006, we will play an active role at the BTWC Review Conference to secure a substantive outcome and strengthen the Convention and compliance with it.

At the same time as taking strong action to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction, we must limit the carnage caused by small arms and light weapons. The European Union believes that easy access to small arms and light weapons exacerbates conflicts, facilitates violent crime and terrorism, impedes post-conflict reconstruction and undermines long-term sustainable development. Additional measures should be taken to combat the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons.

The European Union supports the inclusion of minimum common international controls on small arms and light weapons transfers and provisions on ammunition in the United Nations Programme of Action, and calls for those issues to be discussed at the forthcoming Preparatory Committee in January 2006 and at the Review meeting in June 2006.

In the wider context of the need to control the undesirable proliferation of conventional weapons, the European Union is supportive of calls for an international agreement on the arms trade as a comprehensive instrument based on universally

accepted norms and standards. We encourage other States and regions to engage in the discussion and to express their support for action in that area.

In one specific area, the easy availability of weapons increases markedly the threat all of us face from terrorists; the use of Man-Portable Air Defence Systems as a means to threaten civil aviation warrants immediate action by the international community.

Since the Ottawa Convention, or Mine-Ban Treaty, entered into force in 1999, significant progress has been made, with the use and production of anti-personnel mines being reduced significantly, and trade has virtually ceased. Large areas of the world which had been seriously affected by those indiscriminate weapons have now been cleared and human suffering significantly reduced. We will continue to work to improve the effectiveness of the international mine-action system and to promote the universalization of the Mine-Ban Treaty.

The European Union also believes that the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) is an important and influential instrument of international humanitarian law in restricting the use of certain types of weaponry. We hope that, at the meeting of States parties to the CCW in November, progress will be made towards a consensus on the balance between humanitarian concerns and military considerations in controlling the use of those weapons.

The United Nations will be judged by its ability to respond to the most pressing threats we face, ranging from development and conflict, environmental degradation, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. The international community will be judged by the strength of its resolve. The European Union stands ready to use this session of the General Assembly to help in this task.

Mr. Rademaker (United States of America): Let me begin by saying how pleased I am to see the representative of a close friend and ally, Ambassador Choi of the Republic of Korea, chairing this body. Mr. Chairman, the United States delegation looks forward to working with you and the other members of the Bureau to make this session a constructive one that demonstrates the value of our revitalized First Committee.

In that regard, Sir, our delegation wishes to make special note of your distinguished predecessor, Ambassador De Alba of Mexico, another close friend, whose skilled chairmanship guided this Committee last year to the adoption by consensus of resolution 59/95 and other measures to improve our collective effectiveness.

This year's meeting of the First Committee is especially significant, as it follows the recent Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference and the high-level event. Both of those gatherings were unable to produce consensus statements on arms control and non-proliferation priorities. The United States does not, however, share the oft-expressed view that those meetings were failures because they did not produce consensus statements. We consider more significant the fact that those meetings demonstrated overwhelming consensus on certain common goals, which I intend to spell out here and which our delegation will emphasize over the next five weeks.

One point on which we all agree is the importance of United Nations reform. The high-level event made a start in that direction, but did not go nearly far enough. Delegations in the First Committee can take justified pride in having taken the lead in revitalizing the General Assembly. Now it is up to delegations to take advantage of our decisions last year to focus the Committee's work on the challenges that we face today and will face in the future.

Naturally, most of the responsibility for refocusing the Committee's activities falls on the Member States. No single resolution or rule or procedure will ensure that States refrain from introducing outdated resolutions, or that delegations participate actively in sessions set aside for thematic debate, or otherwise consult in a transparent manner. Delegations may rest assured, however, that the United States delegation will bear its fair share of that burden.

The challenges that we confront today differ profoundly from those of the cold war. During the cold war, we worried about nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union, and we relied on deterrence and a web of bilateral strategic arms control treaties to contain that risk. The preoccupations of the twenty-first century are different, however, as are the policies required to address today's threats.

Today, our foremost fear is the acquisition and possible use of weapons of mass destruction by rogue States, by terrorists or — perhaps most worrisome of all — by terrorists armed by rogue States. Deterrence

is a weak reed on which to lean in confronting these kinds of actors, who fundamentally will not be deterred. Moreover, traditional arms control treaties alone cannot protect against such risks, particularly in a world where certain countries do not honour their commitments as enshrined in those treaties. We need to elaborate more appropriate strategies to address the threats we face today.

I am pleased to report that the United States, joined by many other members of the international community, is making progress in developing new strategies for confronting today's threats.

A prime example is the Proliferation Security Initiative, which President Bush launched two years ago in Krakow, Poland, in order to strengthen our collective capacity to stop shipments of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, or related materials to or from States or non-State actors of proliferation concern.

Since then, like-minded countries, including many represented here, have put their diplomatic, military, law enforcement and intelligence assets to work in a multinational yet flexible fashion. We have begun applying existing laws and legal principles in innovative ways, cooperating as never before to interdict shipments, disrupt proliferation networks and hold accountable the front companies that support them.

These efforts have yielded concrete results. Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) cooperation, for example, has in a number of instances stopped the trans-shipment of material and equipment bound for ballistic missile programs in countries of concern, including Iran. PSI is not a treaty-based initiative. There is no formal organization with a budget or with a headquarters. Rather, it is a set of activities among participating nations which act in a manner consistent with their respective national legal authorities and international law to deter, disrupt and prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

We also have established new mechanisms through the United Nations to address the WMD proliferation threat. In April 2004, the Security Council adopted its resolution 1540 (2004), establishing legally binding obligations on all United Nations Member States to enact and enforce legal and regulatory measures to prevent proliferation of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems by State or non-State actors. Governments also have been working to impede the ability of proliferators to access banking systems and to form partnerships with legitimate companies. As one of the requirements of resolution 1540 (2004), States must put in place laws designed to prevent the provision of any form of assistance, including financial, to non-State actors that attempt to develop, acquire or transfer WMDs and their means of delivery.

Group of Eight leaders at the Gleneagles Summit emphasized the need for further cooperation to identify, track and freeze relevant financial transactions and assets. To this end, President Bush has issued Executive Order 13382, which authorizes the United States Government to freeze assets and block transactions of entities and persons engaged in proliferation activities. We urge other States to consider how they might implement similar authorities, consistent with Security Council resolution 1540 (2004).

The United States has also proposed measures to prevent nuclear proliferation by strengthening controls on enrichment and reprocessing technology. We will continue to work for agreement on these controls in the Nuclear Suppliers Group, while also working to ensure that States renouncing enrichment and reprocessing have reliable access to fuel for civil nuclear power reactors. We are working with major suppliers and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on an assured supply mechanism to provide backup for States that forgo investment in indigenous enrichment or reprocessing capabilities.

Beyond this list of initiatives, I wish to stress our continued commitment to addressing today's threats through traditional diplomacy. We are working diplomatically and energetically to address two of the most serious proliferation threats facing the world today: North Korea and Iran. As all delegations are aware, North Korea and Iran exemplify the alarming breakdown of compliance with the core non-proliferation undertakings contained in articles II and III of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) that we confront today from a small number of countries.

In the case of North Korea, our goal is to preserve the NPT by insisting on the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of both the plutonium and the uranium nuclear-weapons

programmes in that country, as well as the dismantlement of all nuclear weapons. We are pleased that, just two weeks ago today, we and our partners in the six-party process were able to agree on a joint statement that, we hope, will provide a path to the realization of these objectives.

In the case of Iran, IAEA investigations have exposed almost two decades of clandestine nuclear work, as well as a pattern of evasion and deception that can only be explained as part of an illegal nuclear-weapons programme. Earlier this year, the United States lent its strong support to the efforts of the United Kingdom, France and Germany to negotiate objective guarantees that would assure the international community that Iran has given up the pursuit of nuclear weapons. In August, however, Iran spurned these negotiations by violating the 2004 Paris Agreement on which the negotiations were founded. This, in turn, led to the adoption by the IAEA Board of Governors, just one week ago, of a resolution finding Iran in non-compliance with its nuclear non-proliferation obligations and committing the Board to report Iran's non-compliance to the Security Council and to the General Assembly, as required under the IAEA Statute.

We applaud this exercise in effective multilateralism and hope that it will persuade the Iranian Government to return to the negotiating table on the basis of the 2004 Paris Agreement. Should Iran decline to do so, however, the Board of Governors will have no alternative but to fulfil its obligation under the IAEA Statute and the recently adopted Board resolution to report the matter to the United Nations. In the meantime, we hope that all Governments will take note of the Board's finding of non-compliance and adjust their national policies accordingly. We think it self-evident, for example, that, in the face of such a finding, no Government should permit new nuclear transfers to Iran, and all that ongoing nuclear projects should be frozen.

The United States continues to support the immediate start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament. This is an issue ripe for negotiation, and we are convinced that an agreement negotiated quickly would contribute to international security.

As delegations know well, the United States has concluded that effective verification of such treaty is not realistically achievable and that to include ineffective verification provisions would create an appearance of assurance that does not comport with reality. For this reason, we oppose including verification measures in a fissile material cut-off treaty. Consequently, the United States supports a negotiating mandate that does not refer to verification measures. We advocate the adoption of a clean negotiating mandate on such a treaty, unencumbered by linkages to unrelated proposals. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament can get to work on this matter soon after it reconvenes in January. In the interim, the United States renews its call on all States that have not done so to implement moratoriums on fissile material production for nuclear weapons purposes. We are gratified that all but one of the NPT nuclear-weapon States have done so already, consistent with their article VI obligations and as an example to others.

Along with a fissile material cut-off treaty, the United States has also proposed that the Conference on Disarmament negotiate a ban on the sale or export of all persistent landmines. We believe that this measure would help alleviate the serious problem created by the widespread use of landmines that last long after battles are over, and that maim or kill tens of thousands of innocent civilians every year. This approach complements other international restrictions on landmines, and we urge the members of the Conference on Disarmament to give it prompt and favourable consideration.

Finally, I should like to provide the Committee with an update on the latest developments in nuclear disarmament. On 19 September the United States completed the deactivation of its entire force of Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs). Just three years ago, this missile force comprised 50 ICBMs, each capable of carrying 10 nuclear warheads. All now have been taken out of service, consistent with our obligations under the Moscow Treaty of 2002. The empty Peacekeeper silos will remain accountable under the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty and will be subject to inspection. This latest step implementing President Bush's policy of reducing reliance on nuclear weapons provides fresh evidence of the fulfilment by the United States of its obligations under article VI of the NPT.

New challenges call for new solutions. I have outlined for the Committee some of the new approaches that the United States is taking to combat today's threats. In the effort to contain these threats,

perhaps even more than during the cold war, the cooperation of all responsible Governments is essential. Our delegation urges the Committee and the States represented here to do their part and reaffirms its commitment to work with all willing delegations in pursuit of an effective multilateralism.

Mr. Meyer (Canada): Mr. Chairman, let me first congratulate you and the other members of the Bureau on your election and voice our hope that, under your leadership, the First Committee will have a positive and productive session.

We meet at a troubled time for multilateral arms control. The failure this May of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to agree on any substantive conclusion had already cast a shadow over prospects for advancing the Treaty's goals of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Last month, the inability of the General Assembly summit to agree on a text on non-proliferation and disarmament testified further to the disunity of the international community. The Secretary-General, the Prime Minister of Canada and others have rightly decried this failure of political responsibility and have admonished us to renew negotiations on this most vital issue. The weapons of mass destruction that threaten our existence have not disappeared just because the summit failed to find an agreed formula for referring to our obligation to curb their proliferation and effect their elimination.

As the situations in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and Iran have thrown into relief, failures to comply with NPT undertakings adversely affect our common interest in sustaining the authority of the NPT regime and advancing its goals. Canada hopes that Iran will take the requested remedial action to restore confidence in its commitment to the Treaty's fundamental obligations, and that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea will implement at an early date its recent commitment to abandon nuclear weapons and related programmes, return to the NPT and accept comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards.

In Canada's view, we will be able to reinforce the existing non-proliferation and disarmament regime and advance vital international security goals only if we are able to renew a sense of common purpose and mutual respect in this endeavour. Such regimes are only as strong as their weakest link. It does little for the common good if one country's efforts to strengthen implementation of treaty obligations are undermined by another's neglect of its responsibilities.

In the NPT context, Canada has repeatedly pointed to the important role of the additional protocols in strengthening the IAEA's ability to provide assurances of the absence of undeclared nuclear material. As a result of activities under Canada's Additional Protocol, for example, the Director General of the IAEA was able to report to the Board of Governors last month the Agency's confirmation of the peaceful nature of Canada's nuclear programme. I know that that is a reassurance for us all. We must also, however, recall that the failure of 32 States to fulfil the basic obligation to conclude a comprehensive safeguards agreement with the Agency potentially opens up a huge vulnerability in the international safeguards system.

Similarly, we must recognize the vital moral, legal and geopolitical importance of full compliance by all States with their past commitments and the strict maintenance of non-proliferation and disarmament standards in dealing with all States inside and outside the NPT regime if that regime is to continue to be taken seriously and to perform its vital protective function for us all.

Sixty years seem, unfortunately, to have dulled our memories of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Must humanity relive those horrors to regain its resolve to eliminate such weapons once and for all? For Canada the answer is clear: we have to reinvigorate our efforts and those of like-minded States worldwide to salvage the NPT as the core legal commitment to eliminating all nuclear arsenals and preventing the acquisition of nuclear weapons by others. To promote such renewal of the NPT, Canada has proposed new arrangements, including the holding of annual conferences of States parties. Since the failure of the Review Conference has left us with a procedural status quo that would have rendered 2000 a dead year for the NPT, it may well be worth exploring the possibility of bringing NPT States parties together next year in a special session that would address the reform agenda and go some way towards making up for the time wasted this May.

In our view, recent setbacks in the arms control field should not lead us into despair or apathy, but

should rather serve as spurs to corrective action. In this regard, the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament has become unconscionable. We are therefore pleased that the concerned States are developing initiatives — in Geneva, here in New York and elsewhere — to ensure that multilateral work on pressing disarmament tasks is not indefinitely stymied. The fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty was held last month in this building. There, the 176 signatories to that landmark accord reiterated their determination to bring the comprehensive ban on nuclear testing into full legal effect and appealed especially to those holding up entry into force to sign and/or ratify the Treaty as soon as possible. Canada was responsible for introducing the concept of regional action on ratification into the Final Declaration (CTCT-Art.XIV/2005/6, annex) and will be following up on implementation of the concept.

Next year will bring major review conferences in three areas of interest to this Committee: the first review of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons; the sixth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; and the third Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. We believe that these meetings represent important opportunities to advance, in a tangible manner, the aims of those key agreements. Another chapter in the human security success story that is the Ottawa Convention on landmines will be written next month in Zagreb, when States and civil society partners will review progress in implementing the far-reaching Action Plan adopted at last year's Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World.

In these sphere of weapons of mass destruction, Canada is pleased with the continued momentum that has characterized the Global Partnership's efforts to destroy the dangerous detritus of the cold war.

The current challenges to the integrity of international non-proliferation and disarmament regimes have underscored the central role that verification and compliance play in maintaining the confidence of States in these security arrangements. Canada is pleased that, starting next January, a United Nations panel of experts will take up the subject of verification in all its aspects and the United Nations role therein. We hope that the work of the experts will yield practical results for this crucial aspect of international security commitments.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we look forward to working with you and with other delegations to ensure that the work of the First Committee reflects the reform decisions taken last year and that the Committee achieves a marked improvement in the effectiveness and value of its proceedings. Our delegation intends to contribute actively to thematic debates, which we hope will ensure a lively yet coherent exchange of views on key topics and provide for interaction with United Nations officials, working group Chairs and independent experts concerned with the Committee's subject matter.

As one aim of the reform effort is to shorten the general debate and encourage brevity in opening statements, I will try to set a good example in this regard by ending my speech now.

Ms. Mtshali (South Africa): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the partners of the New Agenda Coalition, namely Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, Sweden and my own country, South Africa. Please accept our congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship of the First Committee this year and the assurance of the Coalition's support for your efforts to steer us towards a successful and meaningful conclusion of our deliberations during the next four weeks.

This year's session coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. It also coincides with the sixtieth anniversary of the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. No other event in human history has more tragically and vividly illustrated the horror of nuclear weapons. Today, the dropping of the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki continues to provide real meaning to the collective efforts of the international community to rid the planet of nuclear weapons — and, indeed, all weapons of mass destruction.

International peace and security continue to be threatened by the development and possession of nuclear weapons and the real risk of such weapons being used. Despite the international community's best efforts to date, the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation remains a reality. That risk is exacerbated in situations where conflict and inadequate safeguards exist. It is disconcerting that a State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

has sought to withdraw from it. It is also disconcerting that more than one State party has entered into a nuclear cooperation agreement with a State not party to the NPT.

In view of those threatening developments, the New Agenda Coalition believes that efforts to eliminate the proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be sustainable without equal efforts being made to eliminate nuclear weapons themselves. That is why nuclear disarmament is as important today as it has been in the past, if not more important.

In 1998, the Foreign Ministers of the New Agenda Coalition declared, inter alia, that Coalition partners were "jointly resolved to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons" (*A/53/138, annex*). I wish to make it clear that the Coalition's resolve remains as strong as ever, as does its commitment to further the cause of nuclear disarmament.

At present, the nuclear-disarmament and nuclear-non-proliferation regime faces significant challenges. The failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to achieve any substantive outcome serves to confirm that. In addition, the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to reach agreement on a programme of work further underscores that fact, as does the delay in the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), to cite but a few examples.

The New Agenda Coalition continues to believe that the NPT remains the essential foundation for nuclear disarmament. We therefore repeat our call for its universality. In essence, the Treaty requires those that do not possess nuclear weapons not to acquire such weapons, while also requiring those that do possess them to disarm. At the same time, it also recognizes the inalienable right of all parties to the Treaty to develop research, production and the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination and in conformity with the Treaty.

The review process of the Treaty has worked to strengthen its implementation. The outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, including the decisions reached and the adoption of the resolution on the Middle East, as well as the final document of the 2000 Review Conference, established concrete obligations for States parties to ensure the successful completion of the Treaty's objectives, including nuclear-weapon States' unequivocal undertaking to eliminate their nuclear arsenals, which now, unfortunately, amount to as many as 50,000 nuclear weapons. As we are all aware, those commitments still stand.

While there can be little doubt that the latest NPT Review Conference failed to inspire the international community to believe that the elimination of nuclear weapons was any closer than it had been in 2000, it did not affect the status of previously agreed commitments. We remain concerned at efforts by some States parties to disengage or draw back from agreements already made under the NPT umbrella. Such actions undermine the Treaty and encourage attempts to renegotiate agreements already reached. In addition, they run counter to the very essence of multilateralism.

The New Agenda Coalition remains very concerned about current proliferation risks. Through its work towards nuclear disarmament, the New Agenda Coalition's objective is to improve the security of all nations. In that context, we remain convinced that positive progress on nuclear disarmament would also improve global security with respect to proliferation. It is logical that those issues are inextricably linked. Therefore, progress on both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is required in order to attain the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. Although that is not a new concept, some States parties continue to place primary emphasis on one or the other of those aspects. NPT States parties should not argue that all is well with any one particular aspect of the Treaty — be it nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation or peaceful uses — or that one aspect outweighs the others. If we wish to make progress, it should thus be clear that all aspects of the NPT should be strictly implemented and enforced. Each article of the NPT remains binding on all States parties at all times and in all circumstances, and it is imperative that all States parties be held fully accountable for strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty.

The New Agenda Coalition has always maintained that the only real guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is their total elimination and the assurance that they will never be produced again. As a positive step, and for as long as nuclear weapons exist, nuclear-weapon States need to reaffirm and fully respect their existing commitments with regard to security assurances, pending the conclusion of multilaterally negotiated legally binding

security assurances for all non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT.

It goes without saying that the continued existence of nuclear weapons also increases the risk of such weapons falling into the hands of non-State actors, despite the best preventive efforts of those that possess nuclear weapons. In that regard, it should be clear that the indefinite possession of nuclear weapons by the nuclear-weapon States remains incompatible with the integrity and sustainability of the nuclear non-proliferation regime, as well as with the broader goal of the maintenance of international peace and security.

In addition, the New Agenda Coalition seeks accelerated implementation of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation obligations and the achievement of the universality of the NPT. We therefore call upon India, Israel and Pakistan, which continue to retain the nuclear-weapons option and which have not yet acceded to the NPT, to accede to it as non-nuclear-weapon States promptly and without conditions and to place all their nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards.

We urge all States parties, and particularly the nuclear-weapon States, to implement the 2000 NPT Review Conference's practical steps on nuclear disarmament.

We call upon the Conference on Disarmament, and particularly on its nuclear-weapon States members, to agree on a programme of work and to resume negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices, in accordance with the statement of the Special Coordinator in 1995 and the mandate contained therein (see CD/1288), taking into account both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation objectives.

We reaffirm the importance and the urgency of the signatures and ratifications required to achieve the early entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.

We recall that the principles of irreversibility, transparency and verifiability are key elements in the nuclear disarmament process.

We call for a reversal of the continuing role given to nuclear weapons as part of security doctrines, including rationalizations for the use of nuclear weapons and for the possible development of new types of such weapons.

We recall the resolution on the Middle East, which was an integral part of the outcome of the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, and renew our support for the establishment of a Middle East zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction.

As we are all aware, the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly failed to reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. The New Agenda Coalition deeply regrets that lost opportunity, which further underscores the challenges to the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. However, those and other challenges strengthen the Coalition's resolve and commitment to pursue the objectives set out in the joint declaration of its Foreign Ministers of 9 June 1998 in order to achieve the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. Jenie (Indonesia): I have the honour and privilege to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

Allow me first of all to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We remain confident that, under your able leadership and with your vast experience, our deliberations will reach a positive conclusion enabling us to forward recommendations to the General Assembly. The NAM will extend its full support and cooperation in facilitating your task of presiding over this important Committee.

The NAM once again strongly underlines that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations provide the only sustainable method of addressing disarmament and international security issues. We are therefore not satisfied with the decisions contained in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the recent United Nations summit, given that not all of our concerns and interests were reflected in the text. In that regard, the NAM is deeply disappointed at the outcome document's lack of a section on disarmament and non-proliferation. We missed another opportunity to articulate the necessary political will and determination with a view to setting a new direction and to addressing these critical issues facing the international

community. That is another setback for the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation after the failure of last May's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

We therefore stress the importance of the First Committee and the rest of the multilateral disarmament machinery, in particular the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, in dealing with questions of disarmament and related international security issues. We also underline the need to strengthen the forums of the disarmament machinery as places for balanced, constructive and comprehensive deliberation and negotiation in accordance with the principles of the Charter and multilaterally negotiated treaties, agreements and conventions.

In view of those overwhelming considerations, we encourage all States to work closely and constructively to fully utilize the forthcoming substantive sessions of the Open-ended Working Group to Consider the Objectives and Agenda for the Fourth Special Session of the General Assembly Devoted to Disarmament. The convening of such a special session can set the future course of action, including a balanced approach, to reach new consensus in the areas of arms control, disarmament, non-proliferation and related international security matters, including undertaking a comprehensive review of disarmament machinery.

The NAM remains alarmed by the threat to humankind posed by the continued existence of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction. We underscore that the responsibility for managing and achieving worldwide economic and social development, as well as for responding effectively to threats to international peace and security, must be shared among all nations of the world and must be exercised multilaterally. In that context, the United Nations must play the central role as the most universal and representative intergovernmental organization.

The NAM emphasizes that progress in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation in all its aspects is essential to strengthening international peace and security. We appeal to all States to pursue and intensify multilateral negotiations, as agreed by consensus in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (resolution S-10/2), with a view to achieving nuclear disarmament under effective international control and strengthening international disarmament, arms control and non-proliferation regimes.

The NAM reiterates its principled position that nuclear disarmament remains its highest priority and underscores its deep concern over the lack of progress towards accomplishing the total elimination of nuclear arsenals by nuclear-weapon States. We also express our serious concern that the development of new types of nuclear weapons runs counter to the assurances provided by nuclear-weapon States at the time of the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

The NAM believes that the efforts of the international community directed at non-proliferation should take place in parallel to simultaneous efforts aiming at nuclear disarmament. We further believe that the most effective way of preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction is through the total elimination of such weapons. In that context, we underline that the threat posed by terrorists acquiring weapons of mass destruction must be addressed within the framework of the United Nations and through international cooperation, consistent with the purposes and principles of the Charter and international law.

The NAM emphasizes the need to respect the inalienable right of developing countries to engage in research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination. We reaffirm that each country's choices and decisions in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear energy should be respected without jeopardizing its policies or international cooperation agreements and arrangements for the peaceful use of nuclear energy and its fuel-cycles policies.

The NAM reaffirms the need for all States to fulfil their obligations in relation to arms control and disarmament and to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all its aspects. The NAM reiterates that the ultimate objective of the efforts of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament.

The NAM also reaffirms that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Therefore, pending the total elimination of such weapons, efforts to conclude a universal, unconditional

and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

The NAM remains deeply concerned over the illicit manufacture, transfer and circulation of small arms and light weapons and their excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread in many regions of the world. We also emphasize the importance of early and full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

Furthermore, the NAM underlines the need to ensure that any action by the Security Council does not undermine existing international treaty regimes on weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons, the work of international organizations established in that regard such as the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons or the role of the General Assembly.

Let me conclude by reiterating the need for all States to demonstrate the necessary political will during this session of the First Committee. In that regard, the NAM will actively and constructively participate in the deliberations and negotiations, including by submitting draft resolutions and draft decisions.

Mr. Hamidon (Malaysia): I should like, at the outset, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I should also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election. I also extend my sincere appreciation to your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba of Mexico, for the outstanding manner in which he conducted the work of the Committee during the fifty-ninth session of the General Assembly, as well as for the innovative measures that he introduced.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement just delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), as well as with the statement that will be delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN).

My delegation would like to join previous speakers in expressing our deepest condolences and sympathy to the Government and the people of the Republic of Indonesia over the bomb attacks in Bali over the weekend.

My delegation is disappointed with the state of affairs in the field of disarmament and international security in 2005. The positive outlook and brighter prospects for progress in this field, generated upon the conclusion of the Committee's work last year, have thus far come to naught. The States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to reach agreement on any substantive issues at the NPT Review Conference last May. We failed to reach agreement on even a single paragraph regarding disarmament and non-proliferation for the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1). We are still searching for the most effective measures to collectively address the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists.

The devastating consequences of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons have not been alleviated.

The Conference on Disarmament remains deadlocked, and the Disarmament Commission has again this year been unable to agree on an agenda.

Notwithstanding what I have just said, my delegation is pleased with the significant developments and steady progress made over the past year with regard to the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as in the areas of nuclear-weapon-free zones, small arms and light weapons and anti-personnel mines.

As the current Chair of the Non-Aligned Movement, Malaysia remains steadfast to the long-established and principled position of the NAM in the field of disarmament and international security. The Non-Aligned Movement will continue to be at the forefront of the global campaign for the total elimination of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons. The decisions and pronouncements concerning those questions made by NAM leaders at their thirteenth Summit Conference, held at Kuala Lumpur in February 2003, their annual ministerial meetings in New York in September 2003, October 2004 and September 2005, their fourteenth ministerial conference, held in Durban in August 2004, and their special meeting in Doha in June this year

shall remain the road map for Malaysia and the other members of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation would like to stress that all those six high-level meetings of the NAM, while addressing the wide-ranging ramifications of weapons of mass destruction, conventional weapons and related issues, have expressed strong concern at the growing resort to unilateralism and unilaterally imposed prescriptions. In that context, they have underlined and affirmed that multilateralism and multilaterally agreed solutions, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, provide the only sustainable method of dealing with the multiplicity of disarmament and international security issues. In addition, NAM leaders remain firm in their conviction that disarmament and non-proliferation should be pursued together and in a mutually reinforcing manner.

As we meet today, the stress remains on proliferation rather than on disarmament in good faith. The lack of balance in the implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) threatens to unravel the NPT regime, which remains a critical component of the global disarmament framework.

My delegation would like to recapitulate that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament underscored the fact that general and complete disarmament under effective international control is the ultimate goal of multilateral disarmament efforts. That goal is far from being achieved. All Member States agreed at that special session that nuclear weapons posed the greatest danger to humankind and to the survival of human civilization. Today, all States remain in full agreement with that conclusion, which was reached almost three decades ago. There should not be any doubt that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to international peace and security. More important, however, we must not forget that the existence of those weapons in the first place is a threat to the survival of humankind and of our planet.

We all have concerns about nuclear non-proliferation, both vertical and horizontal. We all have fears about nuclear terrorism. We shall all continue to have nightmares for as long as nuclear weapons continue to exist. Humankind has called for their total elimination. At the same time, we want to preserve the inherent right to the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, including energy. We all share collective responsibility to address those common concerns, allay our fears and reduce our nightmares, both now and in the future.

While recognizing recent moves by nuclear-weapon States that could lead towards disarmament, my delegation reiterates its deep concern over the slow pace of progress in that regard. Nuclear-weapon States continue to believe in the relevance of nuclear weapons, despite the existence of a globalized and interconnected world. Nuclear-weapon States and those States remaining outside the NPT continue to develop and modernize their nuclear arsenals, threatening international peace and security. We must all call for an end to that madness and seek the elimination and banning of all forms of nuclear weapons and nuclear testing, as well as the rejection of the doctrine of nuclear deterrence. We must all be mindful of the fact that the issue of non-compliance applies both to nuclear disarmament and to nuclear non-proliferation. In that connection, the implementation of article VI of the NPT by nuclear-weapon States is crucial. The 13 practical steps for pursuing nuclear disarmament, identified at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, set out an achievable framework for nuclear disarmament.

On the question of verification and enforcement relating to weapons of mass destruction, Malaysia shares the view of many countries that existing multilateral treaty-based mechanisms, such as those under the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), need to be strengthened. Any problems in this area should be resolved within the framework of those mechanisms through cooperation, dialogue and negotiations, in order to reach a constructive outcome. My delegation believes that resorting to other means beyond those mechanisms, such as through the Security Council, would be counterproductive. It is critical that there exist the necessary political will to enable those mechanisms to work in a fair, balanced and non-discriminatory manner, taking into consideration the interests of everyone concerned. Malaysia believes that full adherence to all provisions of international disarmament treaties and conventions by States parties is the only sustainable approach to multilateral disarmament and the prevention of proliferation activities.

The universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty is crucial. Pending its entry into force, all nuclear-weapon States must maintain the

current moratorium on nuclear-test explosions. For its part, Malaysia is taking the necessary steps to ratify the CTBT in the immediate future.

My delegation remains supportive of all efforts geared towards the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones worldwide, in particular in the Middle East. Malaysia will continue to work with its other fellow member States in the Association of South-East Asian Nations to realize our aspiration to achieve the acceptance of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in South-East Asia. In that connection, and in welcoming the declaration adopted at the Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held at Tlatelolco on 28 April this year, my delegation is convinced that the measures contained therein can certainly serve as the basis to strengthen the nuclear-weapon-free zone regime and contribute to disarmament and non-proliferation processes, and in particular to analyse ways of cooperation that can contribute to achieving the universal goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

The challenges and threats posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, especially to developing countries, should not be taken lightly. They must be our genuine concern collectively, and not just in the countries or regions where conflicts have occurred or are still raging. In that connection, several ongoing undertakings are critical. My delegation remains committed to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. My delegation recognizes the importance of an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. We also believe that the General Assembly should adopt such an instrument. My delegation also recognizes the need to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons.

In the course of the past year, we have witnessed the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to launch any substantive work. We hope that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to resume without delay its important role of negotiating new arms control and disarmament agreements, with an emphasis on the elimination of weapons of mass destruction. Similarly, the failure of the Disarmament Commission to agree on an agenda for its substantive session is another setback to multilateral disarmament initiatives. My delegation is disheartened by those developments. Those two important disarmament mechanisms must be able to overcome those obstacles so as to move the process forward. My delegation therefore believes that the First Committee has the duty to reaffirm the urgent need to make progress on substantive issues and to identify specific initiatives to address the security concerns of all Member States.

As in the past, Malaysia will in due course introduce two First Committee draft resolutions: on the follow-up to the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice concerning the legality of the threat and use of nuclear weapons; and on the question on Antarctica. It is the desire of my delegation and other delegations sponsoring those two draft resolutions to engage all Member States with a view to securing their support for these two important texts.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to recall that during the Millennium Summit five years ago, our leaders expressed their resolve to, inter alia, strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and to keep all options open for achieving that aim, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways in which to eliminate nuclear dangers. Obviously, their resolve remains unfulfilled.

In that connection, my delegation calls upon all Member States to continue to explore new ideas and to adopt a fresh outlook concerning our collective efforts in the field of disarmament and international security. Indeed, international peace and security cannot be fully maintained without significant progress in the area of disarmament with regard to weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons.

The international community already possesses the necessary tools to advance the disarmament process. What is required is the strengthening of existing disarmament-treaty-based mechanisms with the full support and political will of States. Without such political will, there cannot be a genuine international solution to questions concerning disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control. It is high time that we reoriented ourselves towards the common objective of achieving general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Multilateralism in the areas of disarmament and non-proliferation is under

growing stress. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to produce a substantive outcome. The recent world summit could not agree on a text on how to deal with grave proliferation challenges. The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) seems to be more distant than ever. The Conference on Disarmament is still caught in a long-lasting impasse. And the Disarmament Commission has not delivered any recommendations for years.

That grim situation is unfortunate in view of all the pressing security challenges we are facing, such as the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to new States and terrorist groups, the illicit trafficking in nuclear technology, the existence of a large amount of unsecured nuclear material, the growing fear that nuclear weapons might be given an additional and more prominent role in security policies, and insufficient progress in nuclear disarmament.

A new course in multilateral arms control diplomacy is achievable. As is well known, Norway, together with six other countries from various regions of the world, submitted concrete texts for the draft summit outcome document. The initiative was well received. Regrettably, the proposal did not command the required consensus.

That cross-regional initiative on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation demonstrated that countries from different groups and with differing perspectives could set aside past differences and reach an agreement. The seven countries made a deliberate choice to be guided by the spirit of compromise. Norway will take up the challenge laid out by the Secretary-General and will continue to seek consensus and concrete results. We will do so within the group of seven countries and together with all the countries that have supported our efforts.

Compliance is a precondition for the credibility of arms control treaties. Non-compliance is a challenge to multilateralism. Regrettably, the international community has been confronted with serious compliance matters.

Since October 2003, good progress has been made in correcting the breaches in Iran's obligations under its safeguards agreement. However, there remains a confidence deficit that hampers a political solution. We therefore urge Iran to heed the plea of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for transparency measures that go beyond the formal requirements of the Additional Protocol, in order to bring the investigations to a conclusion as soon as possible. It is up to Iran to allow diplomacy to do its job in removing our justified concerns about its nuclear programme. We must avoid steps that might escalate the situation. It should be in the interest of all parties to pave the way for the resumption of negotiations.

Norway welcomes the agreement reached in the six-party talks concerning the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We expect all parties to live up to their commitments and to take coordinated steps in line with the principle of "commitment for commitment, action for action", aimed at implementing the 1992 Joint Declaration on the Denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

Despite setbacks in key areas of multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation diplomacy, there are more hopeful developments. Let me highlight the most important of them.

We welcome the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. Our next challenge is to make those two instruments universal.

It is also encouraging that an increasing number of countries are concluding IAEA Additional Protocols, but progress is too slow. We must seek universal implementation of that improved verification instrument.

The nuclear arms reductions stipulated by the Strategic Offensive Reduction Treaty are a positive contribution to the fulfilment of NPT disarmament obligations. However, we need irreversible cuts beyond the Treaty.

Norway also welcomes the newly negotiated draft instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms. The General Assembly must now adopt the proposed instrument and should also provide direction on how to deal with the question of ammunition. Moreover, we expect the General Assembly to provide a mandate for a group of governmental experts to explore ways in which to enhance international cooperation aimed at combating the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons.

The Mine Ban Treaty remains strong evidence of constructive multilateralism and proof that it is possible to work together in innovative ways.

Norway is pleased that the new Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons is gathering increased support. The Norwegian Parliament has approved ratification of the Protocol. However, we need to develop even more effective instruments for preventing human suffering caused by the use of certain submunitions.

We also welcome the continued progress in the implementation of the Group of Eight's Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction. Norway is actively contributing to the Partnership through our programmes in north-western Russia.

Norway is pleased that the Proliferation Security Initiative has widespread support. It is an important instrument in fighting international terrorism.

We appreciate the fact that more countries are signing the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. We must work for universal adherence to the Code.

While we have achieved progress in some fields, we are still facing serious challenges. At the present session, the General Assembly should therefore send the forceful message to the relevant multilateral bodies that they must get down to real business. At the same time, the First Committee should reaffirm the relevance of the NPT and the close interlinkage among disarmament, non-proliferation and peaceful use.

The Committee should again express the impatience of the international community to see the early entry into force of the CTBT. That was clearly demonstrated a few weeks ago here in New York at the Conference on Facilitating Entry into Force of the CTBT.

It is equally important that the Committee support the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and that it call for steps to further strengthen those two vital treaties.

In conclusion, the proliferation challenges facing us are serious. We must overcome our disappointment with the NPT Review Conference and the world summit. We must bring greater determination to our efforts to forge a new global disarmament and non-proliferation consensus. We must mobilize the political will necessary to make multilateralism work. We have a choice; let us use it for the sake of international peace and security.

Mr. Labbé (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, Sir, we congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship.

Secondly, we would like to express our condolences to the people and the Government of Indonesia with respect to the recent terrorist attack in Bali. This is a tangible demonstration of the fact that terrorism poses a threat to States both of the North and of the South.

Chile wants to be quite specific and to the point in this year's general debate. We have repeatedly stated our disagreement with the ritual succession of general speeches reiterating positions we could all recite from memory. Moreover, we reaffirm our readiness to make use of our time for interactive debate without written texts. Here, we urge you, Mr. Chairman, to emulate Ambassador De Alba.

We believe that the impasse in the multilateral disarmament arena is largely a reflection of the confrontation between two schools of thought. The first emphasizes principles and ultimate goals enshrined in disarmament instruments whose implementation, given current political realities, requires conditions that still do not exist. On the other hand, there is a part of the international community that stresses the urgency of attaining partial or short-term objectives, which are also embodied in those instruments and which respond to immediate and pressing collective security requirements.

For Chile, it is erroneous to pose a dilemma between disarmament and non-proliferation. The general and complete disarmament called for in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is an ultimate objective that we have by no means abandoned. But bringing it about requires a series of steps conditioned by political circumstances that must be met over time and that require both national will and a global security context that would enable all States, but in particular certain key players, to feel that their vital interests are being properly safeguarded.

Non-proliferation is a powerful factor within this global security context that still has not come about. We can use millions of words to badger the nuclear Powers about their disarmament commitments, but the only thing that could possibly prompt them to part with

their atomic arsenals is a conviction that their survival no longer requires them.

With regard to the security perception of the major Powers, Chile notes with satisfaction that there has been substantive progress. When Stanley Kubrik filmed his "Dr. Stranglove" in the 1960s, nuclear holocaust was a real threat, far more serious than today. The importance of a reduction of the number of nuclear warheads, the lowering of alert thresholds and the elimination of entire families of weapons stems from the fact that the Powers concerned have made giant strides towards building mutual confidence. And without that mutual confidence there never will be nuclear disarmament. All of us gathered in this room know that very well.

On the other hand, international terrorism and the possibility that terrorists could acquire weapons of mass destruction has bred an urgent problem that concerns most vital interests of all States, large or small, nuclear or not. To come to grips with this urgent problem does not mean forgetting either the principles or the final objectives, but rather requires rational action and a sense of what is politically timely and appropriate.

The same can be said about current attempts at proliferation with which the international community is now perfectly familiar. The cause of nuclear disarmament is not moved forward one millimetre by making a fuss about non-discrimination or by insisting on the inalienable right of States to benefit from the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It is legally and morally obvious that that right can be invoked only by States that scrupulously comply with their non-proliferation obligations and do not play hide and seek with the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Moreover, certain nuclear Powers could do more to let multilateral disarmament efforts bear fruit. No multilateral machinery is perfect. But one thing is certain: the multilateral format confers political legitimacy that adds synergistically to the context of confidence and global security that is beneficial to all of us. It will be far easier for the five permanent members of the Security Council to win backing for their anti-proliferation initiatives if the rest of the international community sees that they too are ready to cooperate to make a success of multilateral initiatives of global interest. As the author Miguel de Unamuno might put it, the point is not just to win, but to win the other side over. In this area, body language is key.

Notwithstanding the impasse we are going through, there is room for forward movement, when there is a minimum of goodwill and diplomatic skill, such as Ambassador Sanders of the Netherlands showed in steering work on Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons to a successful conclusion. Let us take advantage of what room there is and move forward incrementally, thus creating an environment of confidence and good will that would allow us to advance towards general and complete disarmament.

I believe we all know full well that this will be a long and hard road and that neither our generation nor the next generation will reach the goal. No one, however, will ever succeed if we obstinately hunker down in the here and now, ignoring reality and using our multilateral institutions to fling barbs and score points. Of all the dimensions of multilateral diplomacy, it is disarmament that requires the greatest political realism as well as a maximum of perseverance and good will. Let us once and for all put these qualities into practice.

With regard to the central issues of our agenda to be discussed in the thematic debate, Chile fully endorses the text introduced by Norway, representing a group of seven countries belonging to all political and regional groups here, at the High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

The statement made by Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group fully reflects our views.

The Chairman: The Permanent Observer of the Holy See has asked to make a statement and, in the absence of objection, I give him the floor.

Archibishop Migliore (Holy See): I wish at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee.

Over the past few months, the international community had had some hope that issues of disarmament and non-proliferation would be addressed by the world leaders who came to the summit for the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations. Indeed, the draft document prepared for the summit called on States to pursue and intensify negotiations with a view to advancing general and complete disarmament and strengthening the international non-proliferation regime. It encouraged them to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the Biological and Chemical Weapons Conventions.

Some specific steps were suggested. Yet that language did not appear in the outcome document that was adopted (resolution 60/1).

The Secretary-General labelled that exclusion a disgrace. It happened not because most leaders and Governments do not care — many of them care a great deal about the suffering and increased dangers posed by the proliferation of weaponry of all kinds — but because the pressure is such that the legitimate and grave concerns of many, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized, are often set aside.

Although the opening for signature of the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism was an important step forward in reducing the risk of nuclear terrorism, it remains deplorable that the NPT Review Conference in May ended without a single substantive decision. Nuclear weapons are becoming a permanent feature of some military doctrines, and there has been a dramatic 20 per cent increase in global military spending in the past two years. The combined arms sales of the top 100 arms-producing companies increased 25 per cent over a one-year period. Small arms kill at least 500,000 people per year, and United Nations conferences on this issue have still not produced a legally binding instrument on small arms transfers. The legal arms trade is once more on the rise, and the illegal flow of arms to the world's conflict zones is responsible for countless deaths. Terrorist attacks using assault rifles, automatic weapons, hand grenades, landmines, shoulder-launched missiles and small explosives are mounting.

It is disappointing that the principles of and progress on disarmament are being weakened both by the reluctance of some to disarm and by the unwillingness of others publicly to take them to task for such an attitude. The Holy See reaffirms the importance of arms control and disarmament, which are fundamental pillars of the architecture of peace.

All Members of the United Nations have a duty to keep working on the technical, legal and political elements of the disarmament agenda. That duty is becoming ever more relevant, since we all know that security for all is enhanced when disarmament and development steps complement one another. The United Nations pioneered studies which show that there is an integral relationship between disarmament, development and security. We must point up the economic benefits of disarmament measures. Development alternatives to militarism must be the constant work of the First Committee.

The Committee bears a special responsibility this year to make up, to the extent possible, for the omission of disarmament from the Summit's outcome document. That ought not to be hard to do, because the great majority of States want to move the disarmament agenda forward, surely and speedily. Efforts will be made to revitalize the First Committee this year and to set up special working committees to deal with nuclear-weapons issues, and that work should be supported. Other efforts will be made to bring like-minded States together to lay the technical, legal and political groundwork for a nuclear-weapons convention. Those are signs that States are serious about overcoming the obstacles that stand in the way of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Similarly, there is an urgent need to work locally, nationally, regionally and globally to eradicate small arms and light weapons. Multifaceted action incorporating arms control, crime reduction and peacebuilding components will advance human security. The important contributions made by civil society should be acknowledged by Governments. Expanding partnerships between Governments and civil society would greatly strengthen disarmament efforts.

The past year has not been a good one for arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Glossing over failures does not serve the cause of peace. But we have a responsibility to move from analysis to action. We the peoples of the United Nations — as the Charter so eloquently refers to humanity — deserve to be free from the scourge of self-destruction.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Thanks to the cooperation of representatives, we have successfully exhausted this morning's list of speakers. There are only three speakers on the list for this afternoon: the United Arab Emirates, Algeria and Nigeria. The Department of General Assembly and Conference Management has told us that there are other meetings that could take place in this Conference Room this afternoon, so there would be no penalty if we were to reconvene tomorrow morning, instead of this afternoon. The United Arab Emirates, Algeria and Nigeria have kindly agreed to speak tomorrow morning, instead of this afternoon. Therefore, there will be no First Committee meeting this afternoon.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/60/PV.3

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
3rd meeting
Tuesday, 4 October 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Choi Young-jin ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Antonov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the Russian delegation, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I believe that, under your wise leadership, we shall be able successfully to carry out the tasks before us.

The important ideas to emerge from the general debate at this sixtieth anniversary session of the General Assembly have confirmed the essential role of the United Nations in world affairs. The main task before us is to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization, bring the world community together to confront threats and ensure international security, with stricter compliance with United Nations resolutions. As President Putin stressed in his address to the current session of the General Assembly (see *A/60/PV.5*), there is now a crucial need to adjust the Organization to the new historic realities. But that process must be constructive. It should take into account the lessons of the past, and it should unite, not separate. All of this is relevant to the matters to be discussed by the First Committee.

Various views have recently been put forth about the crisis in the multilateral non-proliferation regime. Our expectations in that regard remain unfulfilled. We all expected more of the 2005 World Summit Outcome (*resolution 60/1*) and the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). Nevertheless, on balance the work of the United Nations continues to be positive. We have been able to prevent or resolve dozens of armed conflicts and have succeeded in keeping weapons of mass destruction (WMD) from falling into hands of international terrorists.

We would like to clearly reiterate our firm support for strengthening multilateralism in addressing the objectives of disarmament and WMD non-proliferation on the basis of strict compliance with relevant international agreements in that regard.

Russia is fully complying with its commitments under article VI of the NPT and under treaties with the United States, as well as under unilateral nuclear disarmament initiatives. That has been eloquently demonstrated by the facts: as compared to 1991, there has been a five-fold reduction of the total stockpiles of nuclear weapons. These reductions — which are indeed labour-intensive, technically complex and very costly efforts — are thus well under way. We adhere to the principle of irreversible nuclear weapons reduction. As President Putin emphasized, we are ready to take new constructive steps in this field.

The issue of the non-proliferation of WMD, including its counter-terrorism component, remains the focus of world politics. The Group of Eight (G-8) leaders once again set out their approach to those

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issues in a statement issued at their Gleneagles meeting.

We have yet to analyse the outcome of the 2005 NPT Review Conference. However, it can already be stated now that its work was useful. Fundamental principles shared by all participants were reaffirmed. No one called the Treaty outdated or suggested that another document should be drafted to replace it. All participants stressed the vitality and validity of the NPT as the basis for the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We are certain that new challenges to the regime of nuclear non-proliferation can and should be tackled on the basis of the NPT.

Russia considers the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) as one of the key instruments in the field of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the CTBT as soon as possible, in particular those whose ratification is required for the Treaty's entry into force. In the meantime, it is also important to ensure that the moratorium on nuclear-weapons testing and other nuclear explosions is observed.

We note with satisfaction the outcome of the fourth round of six-party talks on the Korean peninsula nuclear issue, concluded on 19 September in Beijing. We welcome the pledge taken by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes, and to return as soon as possible to compliance with the NPT and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We look forward to further successful continuation of the six-party process with the ultimate goal of the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We support efforts to find a balanced solution that takes into account the legitimate security interests of all parties involved in the negotiating process.

We regard the resolution on the Iranian nuclear programme adopted on 24 September by the IAEA Board of Governors as a signal for continuing and expanding cooperation between the Agency and Iran to clarify the remaining questions. It is our belief that the Iranian problem can be resolved within the framework of IAEA, and we are in favour of more intensive dialogue among all the States concerned. It is necessary to work out decisions that, on the one hand, would remove all doubts about the peaceful character of Iran's nuclear activities, and, on the other, satisfy the legitimate energy needs of that country.

New challenges require new solutions. My delegation appreciates the broad support we received in the formulation of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism. Now it is necessary to ensure their full and universal implementation.

Among the central threats to global security is the danger that the arms race will spread to outer space. We have the capacity to prevent such a scenario and it is in the interest of all nations that we do so. We appreciate the broad support for the proposal by Russia and China — sponsored also by a number of other States at the Conference on Disarmament — to formulate a new universal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space and the use or threat of the use of force against outer space objects. Our proposal is gradually gaining substance, and work continues. We are looking forward to the earliest re-establishment of the Conference on Disarmament's Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space.

Transparency and confidence-building measures will reduce the motivation for deploying weapons in outer space and enhance safety in near-Earth space. In recent years, Russia has put forward several initiatives in that regard. We would like specifically to recall Russia's unilateral statement that it would not be the first to deploy weapons of any kind in outer space. In that connection, we welcome the 23 June 2005 statement by members of the Collective Security Treaty Organization to undertake the same voluntary political commitment. Once again, we call upon all States to join the Russian initiative.

We believe that the time has come for us to take a comprehensive view of the possible range of potential confidence-building measures in outer space, and to update the United Nations proposals from the early 1990s on that topic. We intend to submit a new draft resolution entitled "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities", for the Committee's consideration. We appeal to all States to support our draft resolution.

The Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International

Security, chaired by the Russian expert, completed its two years of work in 2005. Though it was not possible to arrive at a consensus text for a final report, the discussions of the group were quite useful (see *A/60/202*). The issue of information security is multifaceted: it affects the national security of States and overall international stability. Like many other delegations, we believe that the Group should continue its work. With that in mind, we are submitting a draft resolution entitled "Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security" for the Committee's consideration. We call upon all States to support the draft resolution.

We stand for the unconditional fulfilment by all States of their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), especially those relating to the destruction of chemical weapons stockpiles. We support efforts to universalize the CWC, as well as the creation and enhancement of national implementation mechanisms. We must continue to search for ways to strengthen the Bacteriological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC). Elaboration of legally binding BWC verification measures remains essential. The programme of work adopted by the fifth BWC review conference is to be completed this year. In that connection, we attach great importance to the successful and productive holding of the sixth BWC review conference in 2006.

The deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament must be broken as soon as possible. We believe that the current situation is not the result of procedural shortcomings but, rather, has developed owing to the interests and attitudes of States. We hope that the States that are not ready to support the compromise proposals in Geneva today will listen to the opinion of the overwhelming majority and demonstrate the flexibility we expect.

For years now, and through no fault of ours, the entry into force of the revised Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), adapted in 1999, has been postponed. Russia did its utmost to secure the early entry into force of the revised Treaty, including, in summer 2004, ratifying the Agreement on adaptation of the CFE Treaty. Now it is our partners' turn. We have no intention of keeping up the pretence that the CFE Treaty of 1990 serves its purpose or that it suits us as it is. It is clear that the discussions about the future of the Treaty — to be held at the third CFE review conference next May — will be difficult.

Russia ratified the Amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. The process of ratification related to the modified scope of the Convention has been launched, and similar work has started on Protocol V.

Another achievement in the disarmament field this year is agreement on text for a draft international instrument on marking and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. Its adoption at the current session of the General Assembly will help States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely and reliable manner.

Please accept our assurance, Mr. Chairman, that the Russian delegation stands ready to give you the necessary assistance to achieve a constructive outcome in the work of our Committee.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): I would like to express my delegation's heartfelt congratulations to you, Sir, on your well deserved election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I would like also to congratulate your predecessor, Mr. Luis Alfonso de Alba, as well as Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs.

We come to this session following the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, which, in more ways than one, will prove to have been of particular importance. It was an occasion for the world's leaders to reaffirm their commitment, among other things, to the rule of law and the multilateral system so that we can jointly confront the threats and challenges facing the world and undertake a solemn commitment to move forward in the domains of international peace and security.

However, we must note that, apart from the solemnity of the event and the statements of good intentions, the reality is quite different as far as the issues on the First Committee's agenda are concerned. Proof of that can be found in the outcome document adopted at the summit (*resolution 60/1*), which was stripped of one of the basic elements of the framework of international relations: disarmament and non-proliferation issues.

The exclusion of such an important component could not be interpreted as an isolated case or even as

justified by the imperatives of a tight negotiation timetable. Rather, it was the logical consequence of an increasingly less favourable international context for the advancement of the nuclear disarmament cause — a context in which the principles of multilateralism and promotion of the rule of law no longer seem to enjoy unanimous support. That situation, we believe, must be viewed as one of the many manifestations of the impasse in the multilateral nuclear disarmament effort.

The lethargy into which the Conference on Disarmament has sunk, the years-long quest for a hypothetical agenda, the deplorable failure of the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the paralysis of the Disarmament Commission reflect all the frustration and disenchantment that have assailed countries whose attachment and commitment to the cause of disarmament are being sorely tested today.

Yet the context that encouraged the end of the cold war and of the ideological confrontation favoured the advent of an atmosphere of detente and cooperation that indicated better prospects for dialogue and cooperation in the area of disarmament. Indeed, we witnessed a qualitative change in attitudes that led to a softening of positions and to the freeing up of initiatives long held hostage to narrow interests and power plays.

Thus, together with the achievements of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) I and START II, the Chemical Weapons Convention and the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), all those efforts were aimed at freeing humanity from the spectre of weapons of mass destruction that confronted it. The hopes thus aroused are now giving way to disenchantment, because none of the 13 practical steps decided upon by common agreement of all States parties at the sixth NPT Review Conference, in April 2000, to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals has even begun to be implemented.

The present session therefore is taking place in a worrisome international context heavy with consequences for international peace and security. The disarmament process is now showing disturbing signs of running out of steam. Its fate is becoming very uncertain, and its goals are fading from view. The risks linked to nuclear proliferation, the development of new generations of weapons, the emergence of new threats and the decline of multilateralism are among the challenges confronting the international community.

The proliferation of nuclear weapons is unquestionably a threat to international peace and security, and the possession of weapons of mass destruction is a real and constant threat to humanity's very existence.

Although we are aware of the complexity of the disarmament endeavour and of the enormous efforts that we must still undertake to overcome the obstacles blocking its achievement, we are firmly convinced that general and complete disarmament remains the only viable option for future generations, given a prevailing political will among States and a joint effort to resume the debate on this issue in all its aspects. We believe that such an effort requires a strategic approach that would promote the end of the outdated doctrine of nuclear deterrence, excluding any initiative or measure likely to jeopardize the climate of détente and to weaken everything that has been patiently achieved in recent years.

We will accomplish that even more easily if the commitment made by nuclear States to totally eliminate their nuclear arsenals begins to be met through good-faith negotiations on the total elimination of nuclear weapons, as strongly supported in the July 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice.

It is also urgent that the Conference on Disarmament resume its work, that it finally agree on a programme of work and that it focus, as the only multilateral negotiating forum, on addressing the essential issues that concern it. In that connection, my delegation calls on all the parties concerned to show a spirit of cooperation with a view to successfully implementing the proposal submitted by the representatives of Algeria, Canada, Chile, Colombia and Sweden — the five ambassadors' proposal.

Algeria is resolutely committed to fulfilling all its obligations under the international instruments to which it is a party. We will spare no effort to support and promote initiatives aimed at relaunching the nuclear disarmament process. My country's commitment and unfailing attachment to promoting international peace and security are an abiding feature of its foreign policy. We believe that nuclear disarmament — which must remain the absolute

priority — is the best way to free humanity from the threat of annihilation.

Scrupulous compliance with and implementation of the commitments undertaken in the areas of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation — necessary in any effort aimed at consolidating international peace and security — must be accompanied by a joint international effort to promote technological cooperation and scientific exchanges with a view to guaranteeing to all States the chance to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. It is important that a balance be struck between, on the one hand, concern to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and, on the other, the need for the transfer of nuclear technology for peaceful purposes related to social and economic development.

My country, which is preparing to sign an Additional Protocol to its International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards agreement, reaffirms its support for and adherence to all measures aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime. In that regard, we believe that all nuclear programmes must be carried out in the fullest transparency, in close cooperation with the relevant international institutions and for exclusively peaceful purposes. We also believe that such measures must in no way impede the right of States, enshrined in article IV of the NPT, to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In a world striving to bring about a qualitative change in international relations, the atom must henceforth become exclusively a vehicle for well-being.

Regional nuclear disarmament and the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones undeniably help to attain the objective of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation and to preserve international peace and security. Today, it is comforting to see that nuclear-weapon-free zones have been established — under the treaties of Tlatelolco, Raratonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba — in Latin America and the Caribbean, in the South Pacific, in South-East Asia and in Africa. Furthermore, we take this opportunity to commend the decision taken by the countries of Central Asia and by Mongolia to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones. Those are achievements that help reduce the risks of nuclear proliferation and undoubtedly help to strengthen peace and security in those regions.

Algeria is among the countries that actively contributed to the formulation and adoption of the Treaty of Pelindaba, which we ratified on 11 February 1998. We are also fully committed to efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting the entry into force of that important instrument.

However, we regret the delay in establishing a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. In the current context, it is more necessary than ever before that the international community send a strong signal to demand that Israel conform to international legality and that it remove the main — indeed, the only — obstacle to attaining that important objective and thus help strengthen peace and stability in that particularly turbulent region of the world.

In the interdependent world now being built, where economic and social development seems to be the true basis for peace and coexistence among peoples, the entire international community is called upon to face together the new challenges posed by the globalization of trade and the disappearance of borders, freeing humanity from the scourge of war and new perils that threaten it such as terrorism, organized crime and pandemics. Those, in any case, are the things Algeria would like to occur. They also constitute the basic principles around which we have shaped our country's policy. We have always sincerely favoured dialogue and agreement, as well as the strengthening of security in a spirit of solidarity and within the traditional groupings to which our country belongs — be that the Maghreb or Mediterranean regions or Africa.

In the same vein, my delegation welcomes the international community's awareness of the risks posed by the proliferation and illicit circulation of light weapons, as well as the beginning of the process to combat the phenomenon, whose destabilizing effects seriously threaten international peace and security. The 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects set forth measures that were both realistic and appropriate, thereby laying the foundations for international cooperation and charting the course for common efforts based on solidarity.

Aware of the need to establish regional cooperation with regard to combating the illicit cross-border traffic in small arms, last April Algeria organized — with the cooperation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and of other interested countries — a regional meeting on illicit trafficking in

light weapons. The holding of such a meeting attests to our commitment to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and to encouraging the efforts of the international community in that regard.

Mr. Udedibia (Nigeria): On behalf of the African Group, I wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election as the Chairman of the First Committee during the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. Through you, the African Group wishes also to convey its congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. The African Group has confidence in your ability to guide the affairs of the Committee to a successful conclusion. On behalf of the African Group, I assure you and the Bureau of our full support and cooperation in addressing the tasks ahead.

The African Group wishes to reiterate its commitment to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control. The Group believes in the need to pursue, and eventually attain, the goal of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in all its aspects.

The Group welcomes the adoption of the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of the High-level Plenary Meeting, which was held in New York last month. However, the Group is disappointed that no agreement could be reached on the cluster dealing with the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Group believes that further negotiations will be necessary to make progress in that area. We call on all delegations to demonstrate the necessary political will to enhance progress in that area.

The African Group remains convinced that nuclear weapons pose the greatest danger to humankind. The commencement of multilateral negotiations leading to an early conclusion of a convention prohibiting the development, production, testing, deployment, stockpiling, transfer, threat of use or use of nuclear weapons and on their total elimination has thus become a necessity. Among the first steps towards the realization of that objective should be a commitment by nuclear-weapon States to immediately stop the qualitative improvement, development, production and stockpiling of nuclear warheads and their delivery systems. Pending the total elimination of those weapons, a legally binding international instrument should be established under which nuclear-weapon States would undertake not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States. The African Group stresses the importance of ensuring that any nuclear disarmament process be irreversible, transparent and verifiable in order for it to be meaningful.

The African Group recognizes that the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament was a turning point in the history of multilateral efforts to achieve disarmament, in particular nuclear disarmament. The Group once again wishes to express its regret at the non-implementation of the Final Document of that session (*resolution S-10/2*) 27 years after it was adopted. The African Group underscores the need to convene a fourth special session devoted to disarmament in order to give real meaning to the nuclear disarmament process.

The African Group reaffirms its belief in the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as a vital instrument in the maintenance of international peace and security. The Group endorses the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference for systematic and progressive efforts to implement the unequivocal commitment undertaken by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament in keeping with article VI of the Treaty. The Group wishes to express its regret at the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to produce a meaningful outcome.

The African Group reiterates its long-standing support for the total elimination of all nuclear testing. The Group stresses the significance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), including by all nuclear-weapon States, which, among other things, should contribute to the process of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the Group endorses the declaration adopted at the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT which took place in New York from 21 to 23 September 2005. Pending the entry into force of the Treaty, it is important that the moratorium on nuclear-weapon test explosions or explosions of any other nuclear device be maintained. The Group welcomes the recent increase in the number of signatures and ratifications of the Treaty.

The African Group emphasizes the importance of strengthening existing multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements by ensuring full compliance

with, and effective implementation of, those agreements, including their universality.

The Group also reaffirms its strong belief in strengthening the existing disarmament machinery as a means of advancing the process of nuclear disarmament. In that connection, the Group expresses its deep disappointment at the continued failure of the Conference on Disarmament to begin substantive work. The Group calls on the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a work programme as soon as possible so that substantive negotiations can start.

The African Group reiterates its support for the concept of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned. The Group further endorses the declaration adopted at the Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones held in Tlatelolco, Mexico, from 26 to 28 April this year. We call for the ratification of the Treaty of Pelindaba, on the establishment of an African nuclear-weapon-free zone, by the required number of States, so that it can enter into force without further delay.

The African Group calls on States to take appropriate measures to prevent any dumping of nuclear or radioactive wastes that would infringe on the sovereignty of States. In that regard, the Group recalls the 1991 resolution of the Council of Ministers of the Organization of African Unity regarding the Bamako Convention on the Ban of the Import into Africa and the Control of Transboundary Movement and Management of Hazardous Wastes within Africa. The Group also calls for the effective implementation of the International Atomic Energy Agency Code of Practice on the International Transboundary Movement of Radioactive Waste as a means of enhancing the protection of all States from the dumping of radioactive wastes on their territories.

The African Group wishes to restate its belief, as also recognized in the outcome document, in the full implementation of the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a key element in promoting long-term security and for creating conditions for sustainable development in many developing countries, especially those in Africa. The Group made a significant contribution to the agreement reached last June on the final text of a draft international instrument on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. That draft instrument will be introduced for action during the course of this session of the General Assembly.

Cognizant of the fact that illicit arms brokering plays a significant role in the trade in illicit arms, the African Group calls for the establishment of an effective international regime on brokering. The Group expresses its support for the establishment of a group of governmental experts towards that end.

To achieve the desired results, it is imperative that the international community deal with the threat posed by the illicit small arms trade in a comprehensive and action-oriented manner.

The African Group takes note of the First Review Conference of the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Landmines, which took place in Nairobi from 29 November to 3 December 2004, and, in line with the outcome document, calls on States parties to the Convention fully to implement their obligations under the instrument.

Mr. Maema (Botswana): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the following member States of the Southern African Development Community: Angola, Botswana, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Mr. Chairman, as I am speaking for the first time during this session of the First Committee, allow me to express my congratulations to you on your election as well as to the Bureau. We are fully confident that your extensive experience in dealing with disarmament and non-proliferation issues, both within the United Nations system and beyond, will serve the work of our Committee well. The member States of the Southern African Development Community assure you of their fullest support and cooperation.

The SADC member States align themselves with the statements delivered by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group. We also take this opportunity to condemn in the strongest possible terms Saturday's heinous terror attacks carried out in Bali, and we extend our condolences to, and commiserate with, the families of the deceased and the injured. SADC

reiterates its unequivocal condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, committed by whomever, wherever and for whatever purposes.

The SADC member States believe that there is a connection between disarmament and development. The SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security was established primarily because the region recognized that no socio-economic development could be achieved without the achievement of peace, security and political stability. SADC therefore drew up the Strategic Indicative Plan for the Organ to promote peace and security in the region. The Plan would safeguard the development of the region against instability and thus help implement the Regional Indicative Strategic Development Plan, which provides member States with a coherent and comprehensive development agenda. The two exist side by side, as one seeks to ensure that an enabling environment is created for the achievement of the goals of the other.

Despite the demonstration in recent years of the political will of our member States to cooperate on political, defence and security matters, we still face potential and actual military threats within our region. Some of our States are still grappling with armed conflicts; unfinished demobilization, disarmament, reintegration and monitoring of former military personnel; terrorism; and the prevalence of illicit arms and landmines.

The SADC member States can thus broadly support the consideration by the Group of Governmental Experts of the relationship between disarmament and development on issues such as, inter alia, the pivotal role that security plays in defining the relationship between disarmament and development; the importance of addressing the multifarious threats to development posed by illicit small arms and light weapons; and the importance of preventing conflict in order to avoid the debilitating financial, economic and social costs associated with civil conflicts and with armed conflicts between States.

In that regard, SADC is also committed to the wider continental establishment and consolidation of the African Union as well as its institutions and programmes, such as the Peace and Security Council and the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD).

The prevalence and proliferation in our societies of small arms and light weapons is one of the most negative factors affecting our economies and the sense of peace and security of our citizens. Our region is inundated with such weapons following many decades of inter- and intra-State conflicts in some of our States. As a region, we clearly have much cause for concern and have a clear incentive to arrest them (pp.)

SADC has been a strong advocate in the fight against that scourge. Internationally, in July 2001, SADC member States actively participated in the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons and in the adoption of the Programme of Action. At the continental level, SADC member States were instrumental in the development and adoption of the 2000 Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Additionally, through our own Southern African Regional Police Chiefs Cooperation Organization, SADC prepared the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials. The Protocol was adopted and signed at the Blantyre summit on 14 August 2001.

The contribution of such arms to high levels of instability, extended conflicts and social dislocation and their link to drug trafficking, terrorism, transnational organized crime and mercenary and other violent criminal activities is recognized by many SADC member States. There can be little doubt that combating the spread of such weapons can be achieved only through effective international cooperation and by developing strong mechanisms to exchange information, keeping records for effective tracking, considering the issue of proper marking of such weapons to guard against illegal ownership, and developing structures that would enable an expeditious response to tracing requests.

While SADC was disappointed that the Open-ended Working Group to negotiate an international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, illicit small arms and light weapons could not agree on a legally binding instrument, we are, however, heartened that the politically binding instrument due to be presented to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly contains provisions that we feel will effectively combat their illicit trade.

We would like to urge the membership of the General Assembly to adopt the draft instrument and to

demonstrate the political will necessary to enact its provisions. Our disappointment at the failure to negotiate a legally binding instrument will not dampen our resolve to see this issue through to its natural conclusion.

Allow me briefly to comment on the issue of the implementation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. The entire SADC membership is committed to the provisions of the Mine Ban Treaty, as we recognize the extraordinarily hazardous nature of these arms and their implications for innocent citizens. The SADC member States attach great importance to strong national and regional commitments. The African Common Position on Anti-personnel Landmines sends a powerful message as to the priority that the African region attaches to the implementation of those instruments. This is translated in our commitment to the non-use of anti-personnel landmines and the non-development, production, acquisition, stockpiling, retention or transfer, and destruction of all anti-personnel mines, in compliance with the Convention.

The SADC member States would like to take this opportunity to echo the disappointment expressed by the Secretary-General at the failure of our collective membership to agree on language on disarmament and non-proliferation in the World Summit Outcome document. History will not judge us kindly — and rightly so — for having failed to reach agreement on language on an issue of such magnitude. There should be no doubt that the potentially destructive impact of a nuclear explosion on our entire globe deserves at the very least some mention in such a document.

SADC believes that the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) represents the cornerstone of the disarmament and non-proliferation treaty regime and therefore calls for its universality. In that regard, we urge all parties to abide by all of the commitments contained in the decisions emanating from the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference and those contained in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference.

The ongoing concerted efforts to combat terrorism, while necessary, should not deflect from the necessity for renewed and genuine efforts towards the implementation of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. SADC member States view the total elimination of nuclear weapons by nuclear-power States as the best safeguard against their acquisition by terrorists and against their use or threat of use against non-nuclear-power States. However, in lieu of their total elimination, we urge that nuclear-power States commit themselves to the conclusion of a legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States at the soonest.

SADC urges all negotiating partners to approach future discussions on disarmament and non-proliferation in good faith. The world community that we represent deserves more and should expect no less from us as custodians of this process. Any future report of the failures of the disarmament machinery can only bring us into further disrepute. That could represent a failure of apocalyptic proportions.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Let me first extend my delegation's congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee of the General Assembly during this very important sixtieth session. I wish to assure you of my delegation's full support and cooperation as you and your Bureau lead the work of the Committee to a successful conclusion.

I would like also to associate myself with the statements delivered by the delegation of Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and by the delegation of Botswana on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

South Africa is gravely concerned by the general lack of meaningful progress on nuclear disarmament and the apparent paralysis in one of the major parts of the United Nations disarmament machinery, the Conference on Disarmament. The failure of the seventh Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament are an indictment showing that we have not risen to the challenge posed by nuclear weapons. These impediments to nuclear disarmament are manifestations of a serious lack of political will to implement previously agreed nuclear disarmament commitments and undertakings. Equally, they depict our lack of courage to negotiate on certain core issues that would advance nuclear disarmament. South Africa believes that this state of affairs leaves us in a precarious situation offering questionable prospects for nuclear disarmament. Rather than dispelling this view, the inability of the recent General Assembly summit to

reach agreement on matters relating to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation has entrenched it.

Despite this disappointing situation, South Africa continues to believe that progress on both nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation is required in order to attain the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons. Although this is not a new concept, South Africa strongly cautions against the tendency to place primary emphasis on one or the other of these aspects. If this tendency continues unabated, the pivotal role of the NPT as the essential foundation of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation will be undermined. In this connection, South Africa strongly believes that, if we wish to make progress, it should be clear that all aspects of the NPT should be strictly implemented and enforced. Each article of the NPT remains binding on all States parties at all times and in all circumstances, and it is imperative that all States parties be held fully accountable for strict compliance with their obligations under the Treaty.

If we wish to make progress in the context of the Conference on Disarmament, it is imperative that we concentrate our efforts on reaching agreement on a programme of work for that body. It is beyond doubt that neither formal nor informal meetings of the Conference on Disarmament have thus far led us any closer to reaching agreement on a programme of work. Given this deadlock, South Africa continues to believe that the five ambassadors' proposal presents us with a good opportunity to achieve this goal, which has been elusive for the past eight years. It is time that there was increased, sharp focus in the Conference on Disarmament on the proposal.

In general, it is time that we found innovative ways of dealing with the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, as well as the paralysis prevailing in the United Nations disarmament machinery, in order to complement achievements made on small arms and light weapons and on anti-personnel mines.

South Africa continues to attach great importance to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. South Africa and Colombia, and Japan as coordinator, will this year again submit a draft resolution to address the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We trust that all members will be able to join consensus on the draft resolution.

During 2005, South Africa actively participated in the second and third meetings of the Open-ended Working Group to Negotiate an International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace in a Timely and Reliable Manner Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. In this regard, my delegation commends the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group, Ambassador Anton Thalmann of Switzerland, for his efforts to forge a consensus on the draft instrument. Like many other delegations, South Africa would have preferred a legally binding instrument; we also supported the inclusion of ammunition in the draft instrument.

That having been said, we nevertheless see the draft instrument as a positive development in the small arms and light weapons field. In our view, the 2006 Conference to Review Progress on small arms presents an important opportunity to further strengthen the international community's call for action on illicit small arms and light weapons. Naturally, South Africa will also follow future developments concerning the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons with keen interest; we believe that we should adopt an ambitious approach in our collective endeavours to combat such activities.

The question of anti-personnel mines was an important issue for South Africa even before the entry into force of the Mine-Ban Convention in 1999. We therefore valued participation in the First Review Conference of the Convention, which was held in Nairobi, Kenya, in November and December last year and which adopted the Nairobi Action Plan 2005-2009. We view the Sixth Meeting of States Parties, to be later this year, as an opportunity to further highlight the importance of the Mine-Ban Convention and to accelerate its implementation and universalization with a view to achieving the vision of a world free from anti-personnel mines. As one of the Co-Chairs of the Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation of the Convention, South Africa continues to contribute to and facilitate the finalization of the anticipated outcome documents of the meeting.

In the area of biological weapons, we will continue to seek to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention and believe that the 2006 Review

Conference could provide the vehicle for us to collectively move forward in this important area.

In conclusion, South Africa continues to believe that the only effective way of dealing with weapons of mass destruction is through established instruments in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation. Universal adherence to, full implementation of and compliance with these international agreements, and the complete elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, are the only guarantee against the threat of and use of these weapons.

Mr. Hu Xiaodi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): First of all, Sir, please allow me to congratulate you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this session of the General Assembly. With your rich experience and outstanding diplomatic skills, you will surely guide the work of the Committee to success. You and the other members of the Bureau can rest assured of the full cooperation and support of the Chinese delegation. I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador De Alba of Mexico for his excellent work as Chairman of the Committee at the fifty-ninth session.

This year marks the sixtieth anniversary of victory in the world anti-fascist war, as well as of the founding of the United Nations. Reviewing the history of that war, written in blood and fire, remembering the solemn moment when the United Nations was founded and recalling the international community's endeavour to achieve peace and development over the past six decades, which have been full of twists and turns, we sincerely feel that peace is the fundamental precondition for human society to realize its goal of development. It can be achieved only through joint efforts and mutual cooperation by the peoples of all countries.

On the whole, the international situation has been stable, and we see an irresistible trend towards pursuing peace, seeking cooperation and promoting development. The phenomenon of a multipolar world marked by economic globalization, is intensifying, and science and technology are advancing by leaps and bounds. Exchanges, cooperation and interdependence among countries are ever on the rise, as are factors conducive to the maintenance of peace and averting war. Increasingly, countries are opting to strengthen cooperation and pursue common development. However, the world is far from tranquil, as traditional security threats persist and non-traditional security threats continue to emerge. This combination of traditional and non-traditional threats continues to hobble human development and threaten international peace and security.

Human societies have never before been so closely interconnected in their interests and destinies. At this important time in history, marked by both opportunities and challenges, all countries should work together with great solidarity to seize historic opportunities and address emerging global security threats.

As an important element of international efforts to pursue peace and promote development, the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process is at a crucial juncture. On the one hand, the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation regime still plays an important role in maintaining international peace and stability. The majority of the multilateral arms control treaties have been implemented smoothly, and further progress has been achieved in some areas. Multilateral efforts to strengthen the effectiveness of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological Weapons Convention have been further promoted. There has been remarkable progress in the field of arms control as it relates to humanitarian issues. The international consensus on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction has been constantly strengthened. Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) is being implemented. A number of initiatives to strengthen non-proliferation regimes have been introduced, and political and diplomatic efforts have been steadily pursued to settle proliferation issues through dialogue and cooperation.

On the other hand, the multilateral arms control and disarmament process is faced with difficulties and challenges. There is still a long way to go in nuclear disarmament. The obsession with the cold war mentality and with a strategy of nuclear deterrence based on the first use of nuclear weapons, as well as such developments as lowering the threshold for the use of nuclear weapons and developing new nuclear weapons, are new factors for instability in international security. There is a growing danger of the militarization of outer space. The Conference on Disarmament in Geneva is still at a deadlock. The prospects for the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty remain vague. Negotiations

on a fissile material cut-off treaty and an international instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space have yet to be launched. This year's Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) ended without substantive results. No consensus was reached on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation language for the outcome document of the recent United Nations summit. Multilateral arms control institutions are facing challenges. Some regional nuclear issues remain unsettled and there is a growing threat that terrorist groups and other non-State entities may acquire weapons of mass destruction.

It is the shared and imperative task of the international community to address these new threats and challenges, promote the healthy development of the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation process and build a new century of peace, justice, democracy and prosperity. To that end, the following measures should be fully implemented.

First, a new security concept centred on equality, mutual trust, mutual benefit and cooperation should be fostered. The world is like a big family where peaceful coexistence will lead to a win-win situation and where mutual cooperation will result in common security. Countries should build trust among themselves in the security field and should preserve regional and international security through mutually beneficial cooperation. The mentality of seeking security superiority through military power should be abandoned. Instead, disputes should be resolved through dialogue and stability should be achieved through cooperation.

Secondly, treaty regimes in the sphere of international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation should be firmly preserved. As an important part of the international security framework, these are indispensable for maintaining international peace and stability. Because of the diversification of threats and the increase of unstable and unpredictable factors in the international security field, it is pragmatic and important to preserve and strengthen these regimes.

Thirdly, multilateral arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation efforts should be further strengthened. The role of nuclear weapons in national security should be reduced, and the international nuclear disarmament process should be promoted. In order to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, an integrated approach should be adopted to address both the symptoms and the root causes of the phenomenon. Precautionary measures should be taken to prevent the militarization of, and an arms race in, outer space. Further effective measures should be adopted to address humanitarian concerns in the context of arms control.

Fourthly, problems in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation should be resolved through political and diplomatic means within the existing framework of international law. Here, measures should be conducive to safeguarding international peace and security. Differences and disputes should be properly resolved through negotiation, dialogue and cooperation, instead of by resorting to pressure, sanctions or confrontation. A balance should be struck between arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation on the one hand and development on the other.

Fifthly, the path of multilateralism should be followed in achieving common security. In this regard, international cooperation should be strengthened and universal participation ensured. The history of the past 60 years has indicated that as the core of the collective security mechanism and the key forum for multilateralism, the United Nations has played an irreplaceable role in international cooperation to ensure global security. Such a role must only be strengthened and must not be weakened in any way.

The Chinese nation loves peace, and China is a responsible member of the international community. China has always adopted a highly responsible position in the international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation field and has taken practical measures to promote international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. An outstanding example of such efforts is that over the past three years, China has actively promoted the six-party talks in Beijing on the Korean peninsula nuclear issue. During the fourth round of the talks, concluded just last month, the six parties achieved important consensus and released a joint statement. This marks a significant step forward for the talks and is attributable to the political commitment and hard work of all parties involved. It also reflects the common aspiration of the international community. This result should be safeguarded with great care, as it was not come by easily. We hope that all parties can continue to work

together to move forward the six-party talks and to seek a peaceful solution to this issue through dialogue, so as to ensure long-lasting peace and stability on the Korean peninsula and to achieve common development and prosperity. The Chinese Government will continue to make active contributions to that end.

On 1 September, the Chinese Government published a white paper on China's efforts in the area of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. It fully describes China's policies and efforts in this field. The white paper demonstrates that the policies and measures adopted by China in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation have been active, earnest and constructive. It also shows that China has always been a firm force in preserving world peace and promoting joint development and international cooperation.

Mr. Abdelaziz (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I take great pleasure, Sir, in congratulating you on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at this important time in the work of the General Assembly. I would also like to congratulate the other members of the Bureau. In addition, I would like to endorse the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the representative of Indonesia and that made on behalf of the African Group by the representative of Nigeria today.

The sixtieth session of the General Assembly is taking place in an atmosphere that can be described, at best, as bleak, especially with regard to the issue of disarmament in all its dimensions. The current state of affairs augurs ill for the possibility that States will fulfil the voluntary commitments and obligations they entered into in a variety of multilateral frameworks. It opens the door for many, if not all, States to retract their commitments, and it foretells a bleak future for succeeding generations.

Since the Final Document (*resolution S-10/2*) of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, established the international community's priorities in the field of disarmament — with nuclear disarmament at the forefront followed by other weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons — little has been achieved within the multilateral framework in those three areas. This is true despite some progress at the bilateral level, which has yet to be replicated at the international level and which falls short of meeting our common objectives.

Despite the indefinite extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) in 1995, which was part of a comprehensive package with which we are all familiar, there has been no tangible progress on nuclear disarmament; the universality of the Treaty has not been achieved; States parties, particularly the nuclear-weapon States, have not made any meaningful effort to achieve that universality; and, despite the possession by non-parties of opaque nuclear capabilities and even nuclear weapons, we are actually witnessing increased cooperation between those States and the nuclear-weapon States on a variety of nuclear activities, contrary to commitments under the NPT.

This raises a logical question. Are we, as nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States, committed to the faithful and effective implementation of the Treaty, or are we not? What makes it even more difficult to answer this question — especially for us, the non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the Treaty — is that we are witnessing desperate efforts by nuclear-weapon States and their allies who benefit from their nuclear umbrella to expand the Treaty obligations of non-nuclear-weapon States by limiting those States' right of withdrawal; by hampering acquisition by non-nuclear-weapon States of nuclear materials and the technology necessary for the development of peaceful nuclear programmes in exercise of an inalienable right enshrined in the Treaty; by employing politicized multiple standards in addressing suspected cases of non-compliance; by excluding the multilateral frameworks that can best address these issues; and by invoking the universal application of additional protocols at a time when universality has not been achieved for the NPT or for comprehensive safeguards. All of this is taking place without the requisite attention to past lessons, especially in the case of Iraq.

A further destructive trend that runs counter to the premises of the NPT is the lack of political will on the part of the nuclear-weapon States to implement the 13 verifiable practical steps for nuclear disarmament in a multilateral framework, including the establishment of a subsidiary body of the Conference on Disarmament to address nuclear disarmament, the conclusion of an internationally verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty and the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). Regrettably, this is true even though the 13 steps and

other measures were endorsed in the 2000 NPT Review Conference outcome by a consensus that included the nuclear-weapon States.

Non-proliferation has not fared much better. Despite the desperate need for progress towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East, which lay at the heart of the resolution on the Middle East adopted at the NPT Review and Extension Conference in 1995 and which constituted an essential element of the basis on which the NPT was extended indefinitely, as well as the relevant paragraphs final document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, which will remain elusive unless Israel joins the NPT, we have only witnessed regression and reneging on the commitments regarding the Middle East. These commitments are based not only on the 1995 Review Conference resolution on the Middle East but also upon many others, including Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which stated in paragraph 14 that the elimination of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq was a step towards the establishment of a zone free of all such weapons in the Middle East. Are weapons of mass destruction to be prohibited for Iraq but lawful for others? Have the States concerned fulfilled their Treaty obligations or their obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions in this respect? Has the Security Council implemented this part of resolution 687 (1991) as it worked intently to ensure the implementation of its resolution 1540 (2004)?

That was the context in which we witnessed the regrettable failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to agree on renewing the international commitments we undertook in 1995 and 2000. Additionally, we have just witnessed yet another failure, caused by sharp differences: the failure of our courageous attempt to assess and characterize the international handling of disarmament issues in the text of the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of the sixtieth-anniversary High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly. However, we must not view these failures as a sign of a collapsing international disarmament regime, but rather as a clear warning that the regime could erode if we, nuclear and non-nuclear weapon States alike, fail to take swift action to meet our commitments in a balanced, sincere and objective manner.

Fortunately, the absence of any substantive outcome at the 2005 NPT Review Conference preserved the international consensus reached in 1995 and fully reaffirmed in 2000; thus, we remain able to build upon that consensus gradually and without altering it.

We are in dire need of a new vision for addressing disarmament issues in a multilateral framework. The new vision must reaffirm our commitment to that framework and to preserving the credibility of the United Nations and our own credibility as Member States. We need consensus on that vision lest we see the total collapse of the NPT and of all collective international disarmament efforts. That will be the case especially if we persist in addressing nuclear disarmament merely through Security Council resolutions, which generally reflect the views of certain parties at the expense of the views of others.

The issue of conventional weapons is of increasing importance; on our list of priorities, these weapons come just behind weapons of mass destruction. In this context, Egypt attaches great importance to the direct impact of conventional weapons, particularly small arms and light weapons, on armed conflict between and within States, particularly in Africa. We recall our discussions during the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held in July 2005, and reaffirm the responsibility of all States to implement fully the Programme of Action at the national level and the responsibility of the international community to provide financial and technical support to countries, particularly developing countries, so that they can achieve the goals of the Programme of Action.

In this context, Egypt welcomes and looks forward to completion of the ongoing efforts aimed at enabling Member States to mark and trace, in a timely manner, illicit small arms and light weapons. To that end, Egypt contributed to the successful conclusion of the work of the Open-ended Working Group. A draft international instrument is before the General Assembly during this session and should become one of the elements necessary for the success of the 2006 review conference of the Programme of Action.

In conclusion, international efforts in the field of disarmament cannot succeed unless we effectively address the full range of issues in a multilateral framework rather than in a bilateral framework or

within the Security Council. Our efforts must also accord with the priorities we set and agreed during the first special session of the General Assembly on disarmament. We cannot accept the argument that transformation of the political and strategic landscape requires a change in those priorities. Nor can we accept the argument that the security situation and the international balance of power mandate a change in the way we view disarmament issues. That would certainly be a recipe for failure in implementing what we have previously agreed.

On that basis, Egypt will always support any collective effort aimed at addressing disarmament issues within a multilateral framework and will endeavour to strengthen the role of multilateral disarmament agreements with a view to attaining the peace and stability to which our world aspires.

Mr. Seck (Senegal) (*spoke in French*): I wish at the outset, Sir, to offer you the hearty congratulations of the delegation of Senegal on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee and to wish you every success. You may be certain of Senegal's full support as you carry out your important work.

I should like also to state that my delegation associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries and by the representative of Nigeria on behalf of the Group of African States.

Mankind is facing a serious and growing security deficit. If corrective measures are not taken urgently all the positive efforts being made every day for the well-being of mankind could be negated. The promotion of development will remain a vain endeavour unless we gain full control over the various threats that menace us. We must resolutely commit ourselves to face up to the threats to our collective security in a context of confidence and mutual respect.

Senegal considers that one of the first measures that need to be taken would be to break the deadlock in the bodies dealing with disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. This deadlock was evidenced at the recent sessions of the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament, as well as at the 2005 Review Conference of Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). More recently, we noted with regret that no mention was made of disarmament or non-proliferation in the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of the High-level Plenary Meeting held here from 14 to 16 September.

During the general debate at the sixtieth session of the General Assembly Senegal expressed the view, through its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Cheikh Tidiane Gadio, that this deadlock was the result of skewed thinking by certain States that associates the possession of nuclear weapons with a political and strategic advantage. Mr. Gadio said that this was a negative and dangerous position, because it favours nuclear proliferation and forgets that the security of our global village is either universal or it is not.

The nuclear threat is indeed real. But we must not lose heart, because if we wish it, we can still have a world where the threat of weapons of mass destruction — whether nuclear, chemical or biological — has been eradicated forever. In that regard, Senegal welcomes the good atmosphere at the recent Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, held in New York from 21 to 23 September 2005. The entry into force of the Treaty would indeed represent considerable progress towards our common goal of eliminating the nuclear threat.

Likewise, we welcome the recent adoption by the Open-ended Working Group of a draft political instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons (*A/60/88, annex*). It would, however, be very useful with a view to consolidating progress to adopt as soon as possible an instrument, preferably legal in nature, on the brokering of small arms. Early adoption of these two instruments would help eradicate the devastating effects of the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and lead to the same success in Africa and throughout the world as was achieved concerning the spread of anti-personnel mines.

Let us not be mistaken: the most ambitious programmes to support the development of Africa, including those set out during the recent High-level Plenary Meeting, might have limited impact if the weapons of death that fuel conflict are not controlled. I must once again stress the relevance of the relationship between disarmament and development, the subject of resolution 59/78, adopted by the General Assembly on 3 December 2004 upon the recommendation of the First Commission.

The current collective security situation obliges us, when referring to nuclear weapons, to mention the

possibility of those weapons falling into the hands of terrorists, who could indiscriminately attack innocent, defenceless victims.

As Senegal has recalled, no cause is just or good enough to justify terrorism and the massacre of innocent civilians. Recent attacks throughout the world are a painful reminder of the persistence of terrorism, which is an evil that can be eradicated only through the strong mobilization of the international community. We feel that it is more pertinent than ever before to recall that only multilateral cooperation can enable us to overcome this scourge. Multilateralism also remains the only way for us to succeed in the process of disarmament, arms control, non-proliferation and the search for solutions to related international security problems. For collective security cannot and must not be the concern of a few States or groups of States: the survival of all humankind depends on it.

In this respect, Senegal agrees that convening a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament could provide a good opportunity for all Member States to consider the most critical aspects of international security and the disarmament process.

Along with its partners, Senegal is more committed than ever to making a positive contribution to the search for a more secure, peaceful and prosperous world.

Mr. Jit (India): Please accept, Sir, my delegation's warm congratulations on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are most happy to see you in that position, and assure you of our fullest support.

The failure last month to reach consensus on disarmament and non-proliferation issues at the 2005 world summit, which was reflected in the omission of those subjects from the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*), demonstrated our inability to grasp the gravity of existing and emerging threats to international security. It also highlighted the divergence in the interests and priorities of Member States on those two crucial issues, which have an important bearing on international peace and security.

The widening gap between perception and reality and the security interests and priorities of key States have paralysed the multilateral disarmament machinery. For eight successive sessions, the Conference on Disarmament has not conducted any substantive negotiations. The Disarmament Commission has, for two consecutive sessions, not been able to agree even on its agenda.

There is a deep connection between the deficient functioning of the disarmament machinery and the decline of the multilateral ethic in international relations. We need multilateralism for progress on disarmament and non-proliferation because it is inclusive in seeking to build and expand common ground, and also because it is democratic in accommodating the priorities and interests of all. Multilateralism is even more relevant today, with the imperatives of an increasingly globalized economy, the emerging knowledge society and the resulting indivisibility of peace and stability.

It would be wrong to locate the current stalemate in the disarmament machinery in its procedures. By doing so we are addressing only the symptom, not the cause. The decision-making process in the Conference on Disarmament is not dysfunctional. There is nothing intrinsically wrong with it; rather it is a reflection of the lack of adequate political will. If it were indeed dysfunctional, we would not have succeeded in negotiating and concluding the Chemical Weapons Convention. That Convention, which provides for the verifiable elimination of an entire class of weapons of mass destruction, is a model of a truly non-discriminatory instrument. When we deal with issues that directly or indirectly impinge upon the security interests of States, it is only through an inclusive multilateral process of building consensus that States can be assured that their basic security interests will not be compromised. Specific national positions can be both protected and reconciled for the common security interests of all through such a process.

Resorting to ad hoc mechanisms or processes will not lead to any breakthrough; rather, it may weaken institutions like the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, which we are very much committed to preserve and strengthen. In this delicate period there should be every effort to strengthen existing multilateral disarmament processes and institutions.

The First Committee bears the immense responsibility of seeking convergence on views and approaches regarding key disarmament and international security issues. Through interactive dialogue we can develop a better understanding of one

another's security concerns and priorities and expand common ground. We also hope that through our discussions we will be able to build upon the strength of existing multilateral disarmament machinery to increase its effectiveness for our collective good rather than despair that the current situation is without remedy.

India firmly believes in the continued validity of multilateral approaches. We believe that multilaterally negotiated and legally binding instruments provide the best mechanism to deal with disarmament and arms control issues. It is our view that diplomatic perseverance, in preference to conflict and confrontation, works the best when we deal with issues of peace and security.

The issue of nuclear weapons continues to be central to our work. The Programme of Action adopted by consensus at the first session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (see *resolution S-10/2*), which accorded primacy to nuclear disarmament, remains valid even today. It has been India's consistent view that the threat posed by nuclear weapons can be eliminated only through their total elimination in a progressive and systematic manner. India has called for the highest priority to be given to global and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament and, with a view to the realization of that objective, has presented a number of initiatives over the years, including the very detailed and comprehensive 1988 action plan based on the principles of universality, non-discrimination and a balance of obligations for the phased elimination of all nuclear weapons within a time-bound framework. As recently as 29 July, our Prime Minister, Mr. Manmohan Singh, reiterated in Parliament that India's commitment to work for universal nuclear disarmament would remain our core concern.

We believe that nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are interlinked and mutually reinforcing. Only the total elimination of nuclear weapons will provide the assurance that there will be no further proliferation of nuclear weapons. At the same time, addressing growing proliferation concerns in an inclusive manner consistent with the United Nations Charter and international law will reinforce the commitment to, and facilitate the achievement of, the goal of nuclear disarmament. Today the non-proliferation framework remains beset with crises. To address that it is necessary for nuclear-weapon States to reaffirm their commitment to nuclear disarmament. It is also necessary for all States to implement fully and in good faith the obligations they have accepted.

While pursuing the goal of nuclear disarmament, there is a need to take immediate interim steps to reduce the nuclear danger, including such measures as the de-alerting of nuclear weapons. There is also an urgent need to adjust nuclear doctrines to a posture of no-first-use and non-use against non-nuclear-weapon States. India's nuclear posture is characterized by responsibility, predictability and a defensive orientation. That is reflected in India's declared policy of no-first-use and non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States.

India has an abiding interest in the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, not just for its own security but also for the peace and security of the world at large. In fact, our security environment has been adversely affected due to the inability of the existing non-proliferation framework to effectively deal with proliferation.

India fully shares the concerns of the international community regarding the growing danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, including the alarming possibility that terrorists may acquire such weapons and resort to their use to cause devastation and terror on a large scale. It was because of that shared concern that in 2002 India introduced the draft resolution entitled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", which was subsequently adopted by consensus as resolution 57/83.

In the past year India has actively participated in various multilateral efforts to deal with the possible linkages between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, including in the diplomatic conference to amend the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material as well as in efforts regarding the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the Regional Radiological Security Partnership. In that context, we welcome the call by the Secretary-General for the early entry into force of the Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

India remains conscious of the responsibilities deriving from the possession of advanced technologies, both civilian and strategic, and is determined to ensure that those technologies do not fall into the wrong

hands, whether they be the hands of State or non-State actors. India has never been a source of proliferation of sensitive technologies and related materials or equipment. Our record in that regard has been unblemished. We have established a comprehensive system of export controls that is continuously reviewed and updated and is in line with global standards.

As a reflection of India's abiding commitment to non-proliferation — in addition to a corpus of existing legislation dealing with activities of direct or indirect relevance to weapons of mass destruction, their means of delivery and related equipment and technology — India has recently enacted overarching and integrated legislation, namely, the Weapons of Mass Destruction and Their Delivery Systems (Prohibition of Unlawful Activities) Act. That important legislative action, which was promulgated in June of this year, builds on the existing system of export controls.

It is our view that, if the emerging proliferation challenges are to be effectively addressed, the international community should review the existing framework to better adapt it to current threats and challenges and to existing realities while not hampering cooperation in the area of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with States whose non-proliferation records are beyond doubt. States need to show the requisite political will to deal with those challenges in a forthright manner and not adopt an inconsistent approach, as we have witnessed in the past. As a mature and responsible nuclear Power, India remains ready to engage, on the basis of equality and consistent with the requirements of its national security, in all multilateral consultations to develop such a framework.

India is committed to meet the expanding need for energy due to our growing economy and the imperatives of social development, as well as to ensure our energy security in the future. We are resolved to develop nuclear energy as an important component of our overall energy basket. Our goal is to generate at least 20,000 megawatts of nuclear power by the year 2020. The development of nuclear energy will reduce pressure on oil prices and provide a clean and environmentally sustainable alternative to fossil fuels.

There are immense opportunities for international collaboration in the development of nuclear power. We appreciate the decision of some key States to cooperate with India in the endeavour to develop our nuclear-power generation capacity. We are engaged in constructive dialogue with the international community to find ways to facilitate international collaboration in the development of nuclear power.

In the interest of time, we have not addressed all the issues on our agenda. We propose to cover them during the thematic debate and in other interventions. In the meanwhile, we look forward to working together with other delegations to make this session of the First Committee truly productive.

Mr. Al-Shamsi (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, I have the great pleasure of beginning my statement by congratulating you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this important Committee. We are confident that, given your valuable diplomatic skills, you will ably lead our deliberations on the global disarmament issues before us. We wish you and the other members of the Bureau every success.

I would like also to thank your predecessor for his commendable management of the Committee during the previous session, as well as Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs and his Department for their valuable contributions to developing new mechanisms to enhance international cooperation in the areas of disarmament and international peace and security.

I also wish to convey our deep sympathy and condolences to the Government and the people of Indonesia and to the families of the victims of the terrorist bombings that took place in Bali recently.

I associate myself with the statement made by the representative of Malaysia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Despite the important and valuable accomplishments of the United Nations in the area of containing conflict and military confrontation in many regions of the world over the past few years, the ongoing arms race continues to pose a grave threat to international stability and economic security to which we all aspire in the new millennium. Moreover, recent studies and reports have revealed that annual world military expenditures now exceed $1 trillion. That has contributed to the world's fears concerning declared and undeclared programmes carried out by some States to develop or build nuclear weapons and regarding the fact that irresponsible parties having been permitted

access to such weapons. This situation requires that we fundamentally strengthen international cooperation in the area of disarmament in accordance with the principles of international law, the Charter of the United Nations, General Assembly and Security Council resolutions and the relevant United Nations treaties and conventions — none of which differentiate among States or peoples, calling instead for transparency, respect for State sovereignty and national and regional security, non-interference in the internal affairs of States and the right to legitimate self-defence.

The United Arab Emirates is disappointed with the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of the High-level Plenary Meeting which took place at the opening of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, for its failure to refer to the commitments of States regarding the disarmament of nuclear-weapon States, entered into at the 2000 Millennium Summit. That situation is a reflection of the international community's failure to harmonize its views on key issues taken up at the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), which was held last May, and of its inability to reach consensus on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva. We therefore call upon the members of this important Committee to demonstrate the flexibility and political will necessary to assume their responsibilities and to harmonize their views on pending disarmament issues.

We also wish to note that attempts by non-nuclear-weapon States to produce or acquire weapons of mass destruction — particularly in such areas of conflict as the Middle East, the Arabian Gulf region and South Asia — pose a serious threat to regional and international peace and security, heighten tensions among States and undermine confidence-building measures. The United Arab Emirates, which has acceded to disarmament treaties regarding weapons of mass destruction, therefore calls for strengthening stability- and confidence-building measures among States. We also urge the relevant States to reconsider their positions vis-à-vis such weapons, exercise balanced self-restraint and resort to peaceful means to resolve regional conflicts. In that regard, we would like to emphasize the importance of the following.

First, nuclear-weapon States should comply fully with commitments under treaties and protocols regarding disarmament and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. They should work to gradually reduce the number of such weapons in a time-bound manner and limit their use of nuclear technology to the peaceful purposes, consistent with article VI of the NPT.

Secondly, the international community must respond to proposals calling for the formulation of unconditional international instruments that ensure the security of non-nuclear-weapon States and affirm their legitimate right to utilize nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

Thirdly, we must reaffirm the universality and inclusiveness of treaties pertaining to disarmament in the area of weapons of mass destruction, including the NPT. The international community should call upon States that have not yet acceded to such treaties to do so as soon as possible.

Fourthly, we must strengthen international efforts to prevent the illicit weapons trade. We welcome the international consensus reached recently on a draft international political instrument enabling States to identify and trace, in a timely manner, small arms and light weapons. We hope that the General Assembly will adopt the draft instrument in the near future and that all States will take the necessary steps to ensure its early and effective implementation.

Finally, we once again underscore the importance of strengthening international efforts aimed at establishing zones free from weapons of mass destruction, particularly in the Middle East in accordance with the resolution adopted at the 2000 NPT Review Conference and relevant resolutions of the General Assembly. In the meantime, States with influence must compel Israel to dismantle its nuclear facilities and place them under International Atomic Energy Agency inspections and safeguards. In addition, given the negative impact on the Middle East peace process and in order to guarantee the safety and security of the peoples of the region, we call upon all States to suspend all scientific and financial assistance to Israel that is being used to develop its nuclear facilities.

In conclusion, I express the hope that the First Committee's deliberations will lead to a convergence of views on how to strengthen the Committee's work and achieve the aspirations of our peoples to peace, security, development and regional and international stability.

Mr. Shein (Myanmar): On behalf of the delegation of Myanmar, and on my own account, I have great pleasure in extending our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that, under your wise and able guidance, we will achieve fruitful results in our work. I should also like to pay tribute, on behalf of my delegation, to the other members of the Bureau. I assure you, Mr. Chairman, of our full cooperation as you discharge your responsibilities.

My delegation would like to join other delegations in expressing condolences on the loss of life and property resulting from the recent terrorist attacks in Bali, Indonesia.

We associate ourselves fully with the statement made in the Committee yesterday by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The world today is beset with a host of security issues threatening the very existence of humankind as never before. The threats challenging us cannot be met by one nation alone, or by a group of nations. We need urgently to mobilize the resources and concerted efforts of the international community as a whole to face those challenges and to find ways and means to overcome them.

The existence and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction certainly constitute a grave threat facing humankind. Compounded by terrorism, that threat renders the world security environment highly vulnerable. With regard to weapons of mass destruction, we believe that nuclear disarmament should be accorded the highest priority on the international arms control and disarmament agenda. Major terrorist attacks occurred recently against London's public transport system. One could easily imagine a terrifying scenario anywhere in the world if weapons of mass destruction — and particularly nuclear weapons — were to fall into the possession of terrorists. It is incumbent upon all of us to strengthen our resolve and our efforts to deal with these horrendous threats to international peace and security.

Against that backdrop of the international security climate, we are deeply frustrated and disappointed at the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to achieve substantive results, as well as at the lack of reference to disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation in the outcome document of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly (*resolution 60/1*). We hope that that will not be construed as loss of interest by the international community in that important issue.

Myanmar has consistently maintained that the two processes of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. However, much to our regret, the 2005 NPT Review Conference revealed that a wide and deep gap exists between nations that possess nuclear weapons and nations that have decided against the nuclear option. In our view, nuclear-weapon States should, and must, honour their unequivocal undertaking, declared at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, to achieve the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. The will to fulfil that unequivocal undertaking has yet to be demonstrated by fully implementing the 13 practical steps identified by the Conference.

For the past 10 years, Myanmar has introduced in this body comprehensive draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament reflecting the views of the majority of the countries of the NAM. This year will be no exception, and we shall again introduce at the First Committee a draft resolution on nuclear disarmament. We sincerely express the hope that it will be supported by an overwhelming majority of Member States.

Myanmar has always stressed the importance of achieving universal adherence to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the NPT. Although the CTBT's entry into force is still far from being a reality, we are pleased and encouraged to observe that the number of States to have ratified the Treaty has now grown to 125. In that regard, we welcome the convening of the 2005 Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT in New York to coincide with the 2005 summit.

I should now like to highlight another issue that potentially has serious implications for the peace and security of the world at large. I am referring to the issue of prevention of an arms race in outer space, which is a core issue of the Conference on Disarmament. At present, we may reasonably assume that outer space is still pristine. However, the current status of outer space will soon be confronted by a potential security threat, that of an arms race by those nations that technologically and financially can afford

to wage one. Such a situation will bring about serious negative consequences for humankind. Myanmar therefore believes that every nation is a stakeholder on that issue. The use of outer space by nations, whether for peaceful purposes or otherwise, concerns every country.

Myanmar has consistently supported and sponsored the draft resolutions on that subject that have been introduced annually by Egypt and Sri Lanka in recent years. There is pressing need to negotiate and conclude as soon as possible a legally binding international instrument to prevent the weaponization of outer space, as existing instruments are inadequate to comprehensively cover the issue. Myanmar supports such a move by the Conference on Disarmament. We welcome and support the recent initiatives of China and the Russian Federation in the Conference on Disarmament towards the realization of such a treaty.

While Myanmar attaches great importance to the question of weapons of mass destruction, we also recognize the danger posed to human populations around the world by small arms and light weapons. Those weapons inflict serious casualties upon hundreds of thousands of people each year. We therefore welcome the fruitful results of the second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which was held in New York in July. We hope that the draft international instrument to enable States to identify and trace in a timely and reliable manner illicit arms and light weapons will be adopted at this session of the General Assembly. Myanmar, along with the other States members of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), will work together at the regional and international levels to bring about the effective implementation of the Programme of Action.

Let me now turn to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation notes with regret that member States have been unable to agree on a programme of work for the Conference. We sincerely express the hope that the parties concerned will demonstrate their commitment to the process of disarmament and exercise the political will to overcome the impasse. However, we would like to express our appreciation to the successive Presidents of the Conference on Disarmament in 2005, who conducted intensive consultations and attempted various initiatives with a view to reaching consensus on a programme of work, including by convening formal and informal plenary meetings and interactive sessions on agenda issues and other matters relevant to the international security climate.

We are grateful to the Norwegian presidency for having convened four structured plenary meetings focusing on the four core issues of the agenda, thereby enabling an assessment of the convergence and divergence of views held by Member States. It is our hope that those structured plenary meetings will provide impetus towards the attainment of the desired objective.

In conclusion, despite the impasse in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference, we must not let our resolve be weakened by this negative trend. Instead, we must work constructively with renewed determination and the political will to address the legitimate security concerns of the international community.

Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of Ambassador César Martínez Flores, Deputy Permanent Representative of El Salvador.

I should like at the outset to convey to you, Sir, the congratulations of the Government of El Salvador on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. We are sure that you will be able to successfully carry out that work with the help of all the delegations represented here.

In addition, we join in the expressions of condolence to the Government and the people of Indonesia on the terrorist attacks recently committed on their territory.

The Government of El Salvador shares the views expressed by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group. In particular, we reiterate our concern at the omission of the issue of disarmament in the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of September's High-level Plenary Meeting. We believe that that omission contributes nothing to multilateralism or to the strengthening of the Organization. On the contrary, it threatens to undermine the values and principles that we work to uphold day after day.

It is therefore our challenge to correct that terrible omission and to meet the international

community's expectations regarding an issue of such major importance as disarmament and non-proliferation. We are convinced that multilateralism is and will continue to be the only way to maintain international peace and security and to discuss and find viable solutions to the problems of disarmament and non-proliferation in all their aspects.

Although there are concerns at all levels regarding those issues, I call attention to the concerns of small States such as mine. As we tackle those issues, we are assailed by the enormous complexity of finding solutions to them.

In that connection, the relationship between disarmament and development is of particular interest to our countries. Having inherited civil wars and related problems, we face the great task of eliminating the huge quantity of illicit weapons still in circulation, which discourage national and foreign investment, threaten safety in the workplace and are an additional financial burden for businesses. Therefore, as we discuss disarmament, small States such as mine are discussing our progress, our development and our survival.

In that connection, we welcome the holding of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which made it possible to review actions taken to face the grave threat represented by the illicit trade in such weapons.

In El Salvador, we now have a law to monitor and regulate weapons, ammunition, explosives and similar devices and laws regulating the use, manufacture, import, export and sale of firearms, ammunition, explosives and similar devices; the stockpiling, transport, possession and carrying of ammunition; and the operation of firing ranges.

To curb those problems, we are carrying out reforms in our penal code establishing prison sentences for the crimes of possessing, carrying or using firearms, in order to limit their illicit circulation and provide greater security for citizens. A successfully executed idea — which we believe should be discussed further when we consider agenda item 97 (k), entitled "Assistance to States for curbing the illicit traffic in small arms and collecting them" — is the programme to exchange consumer goods for firearms, developed by the Patriotic Movement against Crime. In a four-year period, the programme enabled us to destroy nearly 7,975 firearms, including weapons held privately by members of the armed forces, and 134,405 pieces of military equipment, including ammunition, magazines, mines, detonators and explosives. Moreover, the programme "Firearms not even as toys", under the auspices of the local office of the United Nations Development Programme, raised the awareness of parents and children about this issue.

All of that has provided us with means and possibilities, within the limits of our resources and with the help of friendly countries, to make progress in the fight against the illicit weapons trade. However, if we are to continue carrying out such positive and successful campaigns, we must have the firm support of the international community.

In Central America, we have not avoided the task of eradicating anti-personnel mines. To the contrary, all affected countries are committed to it. But, if we are to totally eradicate mines, it is essential to strengthen comprehensive action against them to supplement efforts already carried out. In addition, caring for the survivors of accidents caused by anti-personnel mines is of equal or greater importance.

Since our internal conflict, we have promoted, as part of our rehabilitation efforts, programmes aimed at physical and psychological rehabilitation, at enabling people to resume productive lives and at providing land, agricultural equipment, technical advice on how to develop small or family businesses and training in skilled trades for ex-combatants and those disabled by war and other causes, aimed at enabling them to improve their living conditions.

With regard to demining, on 20 February 2003, as a result of the general disarmament policy promoted in El Salvador, the Ministry of National Defence destroyed the last 5,248 anti-personnel mines in its possession. The programme was carried out with the Government's own funds. It left only 96 mines for training in mine deactivation, which is provided for in the Ottawa Convention.

Although many countries, such as mine, have cleared minefields and destroyed mine stockpiles, much remains to be done in the area of providing the necessary support to surviving victims of anti-personnel mines. Here, the international community,

and particularly the donor countries, have an important role to play.

At the regional level, within the framework of the Central American Integration System and regional cooperation, the Central American Security Commission — a body of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America — has agreed that the region's police institutions shall be focal points for exchanging information about illicit arms trafficking — particularly information about producers, exporters, importers and authorized sellers — and for following up on and responding to the illicit trade. In addition, the Central American Police Chiefs Commission has designed a police statistics system for Central America and the Caribbean to improve the exchange of information on illicit arms trafficking, among other crimes.

Likewise, we believe it is important — in parallel with national efforts to effectively fight the illicit weapons trade and to improve the controls over the importation, exportation and legal sale of weapons — to obtain training and technical assistance for national institutions responsible for fighting, suppressing, registering and controlling firearms in our countries.

In conclusion, we join in the appeal made by other nations and regional groups to the effect that, if we are to make progress in our work, we need a high dose of political will. Mr. Chairman, you can count on the full cooperation of my Government.

Mr. Kupiecki (Poland): First of all, Sir, let me join previous speakers in congratulating you on your election to the chairmanship and in wishing you a successful and effective mandate.

The European Union statement made yesterday by the representative of the United Kingdom fully reflects Poland's position regarding the subjects on our agenda. I shall therefore limit myself to presenting Poland's views on several developments in the sphere of non-proliferation and disarmament as they pertain to weapons of mass destruction.

The cooperative efforts of the United Nations must remain at the very centre of our common security strategy for the twenty-first century, because many prognoses indicate greater instability in the years ahead. We can expect more terrorism, which is driven not by any clear political aim but by the desire to cause as much death and destruction as possible. The recent events in Bali are yet another sad reminder of these new and terrible risks.

Likewise, we must expect more proliferation. The spread of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) will be a terrifying amplifier of other risks and threats. Weapons of increasing range and destructive power are coming into the possession of a growing number of States and non-State actors, including terrorists. If these assumptions are correct, than all Members of the United Nations must be ready to take consistent and coherent non-proliferation action, using all measures at their disposal under international law and national regulations. There is a sense of urgency and a need for concentrated effort on the part of all States in this field. Such efforts must remain an indispensable part of any comprehensive security strategy for the years to come.

Bearing in mind the growing danger of the proliferation of WMDs and their means of delivery, one has to underscore the need for all Member States to implement the international disarmament agreements and standards in the field of non-proliferation. Such adherence is clearly binding on all United Nations Members through the power of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). In that respect, the effective functioning of the United Nations security and disarmament machinery is equally important. Poland, as a member of the European Union, underlines the importance of multilateral treaty regimes as the preferred way of dealing with non-proliferation.

The evolution of multilateral non-proliferation regimes and the development of new forms of such regimes are evidence of adaptation; more coherence and effectiveness are called for in this field. There are several new initiatives aimed at countering the proliferation threat, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), known also as the Krakow Initiative; the Group of Eight (G-8) Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction; the Cooperative Threat Reduction Programme; and the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missile Proliferation. Those initiatives focus on internationally, regionally and nationally oriented activities and contribute to implementation of the goals set by the traditional non-proliferation instruments. I wish to refer specifically to the Krakow Initiative — the PSI — which builds worldwide awareness of the danger posed by WMDs and helps in promoting and developing practical responses. It also gives impetus to a more dynamic and proactive approach to prevent the

proliferation of WMDs, their means of delivery and related technologies.

The threats imposed by WMD proliferation, to which no State is immune, point to the need to reflect seriously on the functioning of the disarmament machinery. We should spare no effort in forging a new global disarmament and non-proliferation consensus.

There is a need for a comprehensive review of the existing negotiating machinery and for reviving the non-proliferation and disarmament regimes. The Polish Foreign Minister, Mr. Adam Daniel Rotfeld, recently suggested that a group of experts to oversee the efforts of existing regimes could be established under the auspices of the United Nations. Also, a respected independent international research centre could be requested to prepare a report with recommendations on how to transform the existing United Nations institutions and mechanisms into more effective, operational and efficient bodies. Poland is ready to further contribute to this process and to the overall discussion concerning the condition of the global disarmament and non-proliferation machinery.

In developing our thinking on the role of the United Nations and its bodies, including the First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament, the Disarmament Commission and other relevant international instruments, it is important to consider whether their agendas respond adequately to the security threats and challenges. We see those bodies as complementary. Poland will support all efforts aimed at strengthening those bodies and their working methods to ensure better understanding, better cooperation and more result-oriented approaches.

Poland will chair the Conference on Disarmament in January 2006. As the birthplace of many important disarmament initiatives, Poland will take that opportunity to invigorate discussions on how to overcome the stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament. We hope to give the Conference an opportunity to address issues that are key to halting the erosion of its credibility.

Poland strongly believes that, at a time of security uncertainties, the work of the First Committee will enhance cooperative efforts and will increase the capability of all States to act together. This will be our contribution to a new comprehensive non-proliferation strategy and to world stability and security.

Mr. Najib (Iraq) (*spoke in Arabic*): My delegation is pleased to join other countries in congratulating you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. We wish you complete success in guiding our deliberations. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau that we will participate constructively in the formulation of recommendations and decisions that can be the subject of agreement among all delegations. I also wish to associate myself with the statement made yesterday by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

My delegation notes that our agenda deals with items closely related to the purposes and principles of the Charter and to the concerns and interests of member States. We are cognizant of the threats and dangers that the peoples and States of the world are facing domestically, regionally and internationally. Those threats and dangers aim at disrupting peace, stability, sustainable development and security; they fuel hatred, suspicion and the arms race, and they increase tension and violence. They do not promote tolerance, transparency, trust, cooperation, mutual responsibility and respect for international instruments and agreements. If such international instruments, commitments and obligations cannot attain credibility, but are instead a source of disruption, then the present situation could provide a premise for confrontation.

There is no doubt that proliferation breeds proliferation. Lack of trust and transparency gives rise to suspicion, tension and interference in the internal affairs of States and the temptation to acquire conventional and non-conventional weapons. The genuine interest of the international community lies in preserving international peace. We therefore need to implement non-proliferation, arms reductions and disarmament, for a world without controls is a more dangerous world. The same holds for individual regions.

The Middle East region is confronting a genuine security problem. We are far removed from solid peace, and we are facing the proliferation of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and missiles. This is a source of real concern. Even worse, terrorism is spreading in its most atrocious forms and in the most appalling manner, as are fanaticism and extremism.

The new Iraq reaffirms its commitment to and its obligations under international treaties and agreements

on non-proliferation and disarmament. We are giving in-depth consideration to accession to treaties and conventions to which we are not yet parties, and we will actively cooperate and work towards helping rid the Middle East of all weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. Like other members, we will submit draft resolutions in the hope that they will meet expectations and the challenges ahead.

Our country is facing the most atrocious forms of terrorism, and we will strive hard and with great confidence to rebuild a new Iraq that can take its place among the family of civilized nations, while benefiting from its past history and lessons learned. We want Iraq to regain hope. That would be a positive factor for stability, progress, tolerance and prosperity for us, for our neighbours and mankind as a whole.

Mrs. Holguín (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your election to preside over our deliberations. Colombia acknowledges your country's commitment to general and complete disarmament in all its aspects.

My delegation associates itself with the statements of condolence directed at the people of Indonesia in connection with the terrorist attacks perpetrated in recent days.

We also associate ourselves with the statements made yesterday by the representative of Argentina, on behalf of the Rio Group, and the representative of Indonesia, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM).

The recent High-level Plenary Meeting has revealed the worrisome trend in disarmament. The lack of concrete recommendations on disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document adopted by heads of State and Government at the meeting (*resolution 60/1*) reflects the difficulties faced by multilateralism in this field, and follows other recent failures such as last May's Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the suspension of the work of the Disarmament Commission in June 2005.

Nevertheless, despite what would at first sight appear not to be an encouraging situation, Colombia reiterates its confidence in multilateralism in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation, which has resulted in conventions and treaties of crucial importance to international peace and security. My country would therefore like to urge that the First Committee regain the political role entrusted to the General Assembly by the Charter of the United Nations.

The scourge of terrorism continues to spread throughout the world. It is important that we intensify efforts and policies to combat it. Achieving comprehensive disarmament and non-proliferation is a very important part of those efforts. Terrorism can be thwarted through, among other things, the complete elimination of weapons of mass destruction to ensure that they do not fall into the hands of terrorists. In that connection, and although Colombia understands the concerns of the international community as reflected in the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), my country also believes that disarmament and non-proliferation should go hand in hand: they are two sides of the same coin, namely, international peace and security.

The illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons continues to be a determining factor in the world's conflicts. Colombia regrets that the draft instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons agreed upon in June by the Open-ended Working Group is not legally binding and does not cover ammunition. Only through real commitment on the part of all countries will it be possible to combat this scourge at the various stages of manufacture, distribution and diversion to illicit trade. As one of the countries most affected by the illicit arms trade, Colombia once again reiterates the need to exercise greater and more effective control over the world arms trade.

The second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which took place in New York last July, was an opportunity to get detailed information about the experiences of countries in implementing the Programme of Action, which establishes the general framework guiding the efforts of States in addressing each aspect of the problem.

However, despite the progress made, it was clear that the national reports presented at the Biennial Meeting did not cover areas requiring greater attention, such as the enormous number of arms in circulation,

the humanitarian impact of the abuse of firearms and the need for increased financing and support for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes. Nor did the reports cover areas that could not be included in the Programme of Action, such as regulating civilian possession of weapons and arms transfers to non-State actors.

In that regard, it is essential that we reflect — and, above all, take action — so that at the first review conference of the Programme of Action, to be held in July 2006, we can make concrete progress in those areas and develop methods of work and follow-up mechanisms that enable us, working with non-governmental organizations to translate words into deeds in order to combat this scourge that truly threatens peace and security and the well-being of our peoples.

My country has acceded to all existing international instruments regarding weapons of mass destruction, of which nuclear weapons are undoubtedly the most destructive. Nuclear disarmament is therefore a fundamental pillar in the overall field of disarmament.

Just a few weeks ago, the Fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) provided a timely exchange of experiences among States signatories and States parties. My country, which signed the CTBT on the very day it was opened for signature in 1996, hopes that we will soon find a solution to the constitutional difficulties impeding us from ratifying the Treaty at present. We hope that States will be receptive to the proposal we made at the Conference with regard to achieving the desired universalization of the Treaty.

My delegation hopes that the substantive session of the Open-ended Working Group to consider the objectives and agenda, including the possible establishment of the preparatory committee, for the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, which is to take place soon, will be an opportunity to exchange points of view, proposals and objectives that will strengthen the global disarmament and non-proliferation machinery.

Anti-personnel landmines pose a serious obstacle to the social and economic development of many countries. As a State party to the Ottawa Convention, Colombia is making great efforts to eradicate those lethal weapons that do not discriminate among their victims. My country is working to achieve the full universalization of this important Treaty. We call upon those States that have not yet signed the Convention to do so. Colombia particularly appeals to the donor community and non-governmental organizations to continue resolutely to provide sustained assistance to victims in order that they can be reintegrated into society, both psychologically and socio-economically.

Colombia once again underscores the importance of continuing to vigorously condemn the use of anti-personnel landmines by illegal armed groups. We all know that achieving the primary objective of the Ottawa Convention of a world free of landmines will be a reality only when those groups stop using landmines.

We hope that we will be able to achieve concrete and positive results on the issues before us at this session of the General Assembly.

Mr. Hannesson (Iceland): First of all, may I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

As the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iceland stated at the recently concluded general debate (see *A/60/PV.16*), we had high expectations for the outcome of the world summit. However, the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) fell short of our expectations. Like the Secretary-General and many others, we are very disappointed that disarmament and non-proliferation issues were not even addressed in the document.

We all know that the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction poses one of the most serious security threats of our time, not least because of the danger of such weapons falling into the hands of terrorist organizations and non-State actors. It is vital that the international community strengthen preventive measures to suppress terrorism. Iceland is fully committed to that effort. Last month, the Prime Minister of Iceland, on behalf of Iceland, signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Iceland regrets that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held in May also failed to respond to the challenges facing the international community. Since its entry into force, the NPT has been the centrepiece of international security. It has

served as the main pillar in global efforts to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons. We must make sure that it is not eroded.

Iceland strongly supports the continuing efforts of Norway and other countries to seek consensus and concrete results in addressing the urgent challenges facing the nuclear-non proliferation regime.

We welcome practical initiatives that can complement the NPT and that are aimed at strengthening the non-proliferation regime, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) addressing the serious concerns about the risk of non-State actors gaining access to weapons of mass destruction.

Iceland supports efforts to find a diplomatic solution to the many questions surrounding Iran's nuclear programme. The Iranian authorities must fully comply with the International Atomic Energy Agency's requirements for transparency in the development of their nuclear programme.

Iceland welcomes the joint statement by the participants in the six-party talks on the principles for a peaceful and verifiable denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. We note in particular the renewal of the commitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandon nuclear weapons and all existing nuclear programmes, and its undertaking to return to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). In this context, we emphasize the importance of adopting measures to deal with withdrawal from the NPT.

For a number of years, we have expressed in this forum our regret over the stalemate in the United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery, not least in the Conference on Disarmament. We continue to state our view on the sorry state of affairs at that important forum in Geneva.

Finally, I would like to say that Iceland is firmly committed to the reform of the United Nations. In recent years, the First Committee has been engaged in discussing ways and means to effect organizational reform and reform of our working methods. Let me say once again that we support fewer and better studies and fewer and more focused resolutions which have a realistic chance of being followed up. We believe that we need a procedure according to which we decide what measures are necessary and what their time frame should be, and that resolutions should be renewed only if they are considered important in the light of experience.

The Chairman: Before adjourning the meeting, let me recall that the rolling list of speakers for the general debate will be closed today at 6 p.m.

The meeting rose at 12.35 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/60/PV.4

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
4th meeting
Tuesday, 4 October 2005, 3 p.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Choi Young-jin ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda items 85 to 105 (*continued*)

General debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items

Mr. Shin Kak-soo (Republic of Korea): Today, the First Committee is more important than ever, as the rest of the multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation machinery is in such disarray. The longstanding stalemate in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) and the inaction of the United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) over the past two years made the lack of agreement at the May 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) all the more disheartening. It is a pity, under the circumstances, that the historic world summit held three weeks ago was unable to provide the political impetus to resuscitate the disarmament and non-proliferation machinery or to move the pressing agendas forward. Against that backdrop, the importance of the First Committee cannot be overemphasized: it is, at the moment, our best hope for rekindling the light of disarmament and non-proliferation.

As Secretary-General Kofi Annan noted at the opening of the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), on 21 September, nothing is insurmountable if we have the resolve to overcome it. The recent progress at the six-party talks is testimony to such resolve. Despite enormous difficulties and deep divisions, the six parties came together with the common aim of realizing the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula. Supported by the rest of the international community, they were able to reach a historic agreement that leads the way to resolving the North Korean nuclear issue once and for all. We earnestly hope that that hard-won agreement, through its full and smooth implementation, will contribute to strengthening the NPT regime as well as to consolidating peace and security in North-East Asia and beyond.

As usual, the agenda before the Committee this year is extensive and varied. We are eager to participate fully in each phase of the debate, especially on matters of particular interest to my delegation. Today, at the outset of this important session, I would like to highlight several issues.

First, we reiterate our unswerving support for the central role of the NPT in deterring nuclear proliferation, reducing nuclear arsenals and promoting the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. In turbulent times, the NPT has been and will remain a lighthouse to guide our struggle against nuclear proliferation. Securing the universality of the NPT should therefore be a priority. The non-proliferation norms of the NPT should be fully observed, and measures for fortifying and complementing the regime should be seriously debated and expeditiously taken.

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The Republic of Korea attaches great importance to strengthening the verification capabilities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) through the universal adoption of the Model Additional Protocol as a new standard of verification. With regard to the issue of fuel-cycle control, we welcome the report of the IAEA Director General's Expert Group on Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle. In particular, we support the measures recommended to provide assurances regarding both nuclear fuel supplies and non-proliferation. We look forward to participating actively in discussions on turning the sensible ideas in the report into concrete actions.

Secondly, my delegation strongly supports the early entry into force of the CTBT. Meanwhile, as an interim measure prior to the entry into force of the Treaty, a moratorium on nuclear testing should be maintained. We also support an immediate start to negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, noting with regret that delays in that regard are largely attributable to the impasse in the Conference on Disarmament, which has lasted for almost nine years now. We hope that innovative ideas will emerge in our discussions this session on how to break the deadlock and revitalize the Commission.

Thirdly, the nightmare scenario of terrorism involving weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) — particularly nuclear terrorism — remains all too likely to become a waking reality. In tackling that issue, we recognize that the key roles must be played by the NPT, the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material and Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). However, in order to enhance the effectiveness of controls on materials, equipment and technology related to WMDs, it is imperative to strengthen the role of the established export control systems, such as the Zangger Committee, the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime and the Australia Group. We also support the Hague Code of Conduct, aimed at deterring the proliferation of ballistic missiles.

Fourthly, in contrast to the dismal progress in the field of WMDs, we welcome the considerable progress made in curbing the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Particularly encouraging was the successful conclusion last June of negotiations on a draft international instrument to mark and trace small arms and light weapons. Although the instrument is not legally binding, and although it excludes ammunition and was watered down in certain other respects, it, together with the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, will greatly facilitate efforts to control the illicit trade in such weapons. My delegation hopes that the 2006 Review Conference for the Programme of Action will further develop the basis for preventing the misuse of small arms and light weapons, not least by confronting the issue of illicit brokering.

As a strong advocate for the just causes of disarmament and non-proliferation, the Republic of Korea has done its utmost to participate in non-proliferation and disarmament efforts at the bilateral, subregional, regional and global levels. Our constructive engagement has enabled us to host an annual international conference on disarmament and non-proliferation, in cooperation with the Department for Disarmament Affairs. This year, the conference will be held in early December in Busan, the second-largest city in the Republic of Korea. The Republic of Korea also hosted the Nuclear Suppliers Group plenary meeting in Busan in 2003 and the Missile Technology Control Regime plenary meeting in Seoul in 2004.

By hosting such events, we hope to demonstrate our ongoing commitment to attaining the objectives of disarmament and non-proliferation. I assure you, Mr. Chairman, that our participation in the Committee's deliberations will be carried out in the same spirit.

Mr. Al-Najem (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): We wish to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. We are confident that your expertise and wisdom will guarantee the success of our work this year. We are prepared to cooperate fully with you as you carry out your new mandate. I also congratulate the other members of the Bureau. Moreover, I cannot fail to commend Mr. Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs for his statement at the beginning of the session.

Kuwait supports the central role played by the United Nations in facing the main challenges confronting the international community, particularly terrorism and the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), in addition to other, no less important threats, including hunger, poverty and the spread of deadly diseases in developing countries.

Those threats are interrelated, just as security and development are interdependent, we cannot make progress in one area while neglecting the others. It is unfortunate that we have to compare what has been achieved in the fields of sustainable development, financing and trade to the negligible achievements in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The Conference on Disarmament has not been able to agree on an agenda and is still at an impasse, and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) has not yet become universal. Military expenditures on all kinds of weapons have increased, totalling more than $4 trillion in 2004. Both the international community and multilateral diplomacy have failed twice during the past four months in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation: first, the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT, held in 2005, failed to reach agreement on any substantive issues; and secondly, the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the High-level Plenary Meeting did not mention the issue of disarmament and non-proliferation.

The lost opportunities to tackle the most critical problems — not only those associated with the non-nuclear proliferation regime, but also those involving the even more important issue of international security — have stiffened the determination of Member States to address this important issue. They should strive to enter a new historic era by overcoming their differences and cooperating to eliminate the nuclear threat and to achieve complete nuclear disarmament. To attain that objective would be to create a world free of weapons of mass destruction.

Although the international community is aware of the threats posed to international peace and security by nuclear weapons and other WMDs, the progress needed to eliminate those threats has not been made because of a lack of political will by some countries to comply with international conventions and treaties. Therefore, it is urgent that we strive to take confidence-building measures to attain the desired objective of a world free from all such devastating weapons — a world where peace and security prevail.

Kuwait, convinced of the importance of collective action, has ratified the following conventions and treaties: the NPT; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction; the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction; the safeguards agreement of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA); an Additional Protocol in the framework of the NPT; the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident; the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency; and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Kuwait urges all those countries that have not joined the IAEA comprehensive safeguards regime to do so. Kuwait also encourages those States that have signed the safeguards agreement but have not yet signed an additional protocol to do so. This regime is considered a basic standard and the additional protocol a complementary mechanism to monitor illegal nuclear activities.

Kuwait hopes that all States parties to the NPT will comply with their obligations as set out in the Treaty and the safeguards regime and that they will cooperate closely with the IAEA to resolve all issues regarding their programmes through negotiation and constructive dialogue.

Concerned about the security and stability of the Arabian Gulf, the State of Kuwait has welcomed the readiness of the Islamic Republic of Iran to cooperate and coordinate with the international community and with the IAEA regarding its nuclear programme, as well as its assurances that it would not develop WMDs and that the programme would be used only for peaceful purposes.

The Middle East region will not see security and stability as long as Israel — the only State in the region that has not yet acceded to the NPT and that possesses nuclear weapons — is not requested to accede immediately to the Treaty, to dismantle its nuclear arsenal and to submit its nuclear facilities to the IAEA safeguards regime. Israel's status is a source of clear imbalance among the region's powers and a source of constant concern in the Middle East, which should be a zone free of weapons of mass destruction. Kuwait calls upon the international community to refrain from providing Israel with scientific and technological know-how that would help to build up the Israeli nuclear arsenal.

Kuwait has highlighted the importance of the advisory opinion issued by the International Court of

Justice in July 1997 on the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons in the settlement of conflicts. Kuwait endorses the adoption of effective international measures to provide non-nuclear States with guarantees against the threat or use of nuclear weapons.

Kuwait reiterates its support for the adoption of a non-discriminatory, multilateral treaty that is internationally verifiable to prohibit the production of fissile material for the purpose of developing nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.

Kuwait welcomed the adoption of Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), which is aimed at preventing terrorist groups from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and their components. In the context of implementing that resolution, the competent authorities in Kuwait have prepared a report setting out measures that have been taken to ensure compliance with its provisions. On 16 September, in the framework of the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, the State of Kuwait signed the International Convention on the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Kuwait would like to draw attention to what occurred at the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry Into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, and calls on the 11 States whose ratification is required for entry into force to ratify the Treaty. Kuwait calls upon the nuclear-weapon States to continue to respect the moratorium on nuclear testing until the Treaty enters into force.

With regard to the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and efforts to combat and eliminate such traffic, Kuwait welcomes efforts to implement the Programme of Action that has been agreed upon. Kuwait also welcomes the efforts of the Working Group mandated to conclude a legal instrument to combat such weapons, whose dissemination has contributed to many conflicts over many decades and has led to the death of thousands, as well as obstructing the path to development in many countries.

In conclusion, we hope that the Committee will be able to help produce a consensus that fulfils the aspirations of Member States to international peace and security.

Mr. Streuli (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I should like at the outset to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee and to assure you of the full support of my delegation in the exercise of your functions.

The First Committee is the ideal platform for debates on the subject of arms control and disarmament. If we are to have the most substantive exchange of views possible in this context, we believe that it is essential that we implement the measures adopted last year to improve our working methods.

Generally speaking, the international forums for negotiating arms control and disarmament issues remain deadlocked. That deadlock is the result not of the negotiating structures, but of a lack of will on the part of States to engage in negotiations. The interests of States and their priorities still diverge too widely to allow a package of negotiations to be agreed upon. Changing the structure would therefore change nothing.

Unfortunately, the period between the end of the 2004 session of the First Committee and the beginning of this year's session was marked by a series of failures. First, the delegates to the seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) parted company without having been able to agree on a substantial final document. Switzerland remains convinced that only an approach which takes into account the security interests of all will enable us to strengthen the NPT. For some, those interests are linked to the risks involved in proliferation. For others, they are tied to the fear of not being able to benefit from the new technologies that are essential for development. Still others are concerned about the slow pace of nuclear disarmament. That is why, in its final statement, Switzerland expressed the hope that the wide-ranging exchange of views made possible by the seventh Review Conference could serve as a basis for the resumption of negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament.

Secondly, the annual report of the Conference on Disarmament to the General Assembly (A/60/27) once again reflects the paralysis to which I referred. Diverging views about priorities will again create major obstacles when the time comes to agree on a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament in 2006. Nonetheless, my country will remain open to any existing and future proposals that might lead to substantive negotiations in Geneva.

Thirdly, the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the summit of heads of State or Government, who met in September in commemoration of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations, confirms the current state of deadlock in the area of arms control and disarmament, since it contains no reference to disarmament.

Fourthly, Switzerland is pleased to note, on the other hand, that the efforts of the States engaged in the six-party talks on the nuclear issues on the Korean peninsula led to a joint statement whose content seems promising to us. Switzerland welcomes that development, and encourages the States involved in that process to continue to act in a sprit of consensus that will make it possible to translate into reality the commitments contained in the joint statement.

The lack of progress in the area of weapons of mass destruction is worrying, particularly in the light of the risk of proliferation and the potential link to terrorism. Although the complete elimination of such weapons remains a long-term objective, it is essential that we continue our efforts. To that end, Switzerland believes that the implementation of certain measures that are attainable in the short term could bring us closer to the ultimate objective.

The first and, undoubtedly, the most urgent of those measures is respect for existing commitments. Switzerland recognizes the right of all the States parties to the NPT to utilize nuclear energy for civilian purposes. In this context, full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is essential. My country is concerned about the situation that led to the adoption, by the Agency's Board of Governors on 24 September, of a resolution on Iran. My country appeals to all of the parties involved to pursue their dialogue with a view to reaching a solution that is acceptable to all. Switzerland also warmly invites all States to continue to respect the commitments entered into in the context of the various treaties and regimes relating to weapons of mass destruction.

A second important measure is working towards the achievement of universality for all agreements concerning weapons of mass destruction. Thus, the countries that have not yet ratified the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) should do so without further delay, in response to the appeal made in the joint statement of the Conference on article XIV of the CTBT, held in New York in September. The appeal extends also to the urgent ratification of both the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention.

A third measure is to begin, without delay, and in the context of our mandate, negotiations in the framework of the Conference on Disarmament to halt the production of fissile material for military purposes. To that end, my country hopes that all States members of the Conference on Disarmament will be able to agree, at the beginning of next year, on a programme of work that will allow us to get down to the job at hand. Switzerland is ready to begin negotiations without any prior conditions. It is our assumption that the issue of verification will be part of the negotiating process.

Developments in the area of conventional weapons are more encouraging. With regard to small arms and light weapons, substantial progress has been made in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action. The Open-ended Working Group that is mandated to negotiate a draft international instrument to enable States to identify and trace, in a timely and reliable manner, small arms and light weapons has completed its work, under the chairmanship of my colleague, Ambassador Anton Thalmann. In its procedural report (A/60/88), the Working Group recommends the adoption by the General Assembly at its sixtieth session of the draft instrument contained in the annex to the report. My delegation would stress that the Working Group managed to achieve consensus in June on the substance and nature of the draft instrument. Pursuant to paragraph 24 of the Working Group's report, Switzerland will submit a draft decision to the General Assembly on the adoption of the international instrument, hopefully by consensus.

Mr. Effah-Apenteng (Ghana): At the outset, permit me to join other speakers in conveying my delegation's congratulations to you, Sir, on your assumption of the chairmanship and to assure you of my delegation's full cooperation in ensuring the success of your stewardship of the work of this session.

My delegation associates itself with the statement made by the representatives of Indonesia and Nigeria on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the African Group, respectively. Let me, at this juncture, extend my delegation's heartfelt condolences to the

Government and people of Indonesia following last weekend's terrorist attack in Bali.

We meet again this year amid the reality of daunting challenges that continue to confront the international disarmament regime. As at previous sessions, issues relating to international security, disarmament, non-proliferation and the fear of acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by terrorist groups continue to be the dominant themes of our deliberations. That is an eloquent manifestation of the fact that, 60 years after the birth of our Organization out of the tragedies of war, the cardinal goal of creating a world devoid of fear of war remains an illusion.

In that connection, Ghana shares the concern of the majority of States over the dismal developments in international disarmament over the past 12 months. My country's initial optimism that the seventh Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) would build on and strengthen previous agreements reached in 1995 and 2000 was shattered by the failure of the Conference to produce substantive results. If the conclusion of the Review Conference was regrettable, then the absence of reference to disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the outcome document of the 2005 world summit is equally disturbing, since it portrays either a creeping lethargy within the international community over disarmament issues or a lack of appreciation of the gravity of the situation confronting us.

In the opinion of my delegation, the recent setback, rather than creating an atmosphere of despondency among Member states, should spur us to intensify our collective effort to achieve the ultimate — a world free from the scourge of war, especially a nuclear Armageddon. After all, it is only in a secure global environment that the pursuit and promotion of other important issues, such as development, human rights and the rule of law, can be effectively sustained. The responsibilities of Member States are unambiguous and we should resolve to unequivocally abide by our commitments.

The 2005 world summit reaffirmed the imperative need for multilateralism, which, admittedly, has been under grave pressure in recent years. Considering the dire strains on the international disarmament machinery, it is not only proper, but expedient, that the revival of multilateralism be embraced in the domain of international peace and security. Now more than ever, we need to work together as a community of nations to address the challenges confronting us. In an environment of collective security, unilateral measures are an aberration, if not anachronistic and dysfunctional.

Given that the attainment of a verifiable missile cut-off treaty would impact positively on non-proliferation and disarmament, efforts must be made to surmount the impasse in the programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and to facilitate the resumption of negotiations on the issue and other related matters. Equally, the Disarmament Commission should be freed from strangulation by the parochial interests of member States in order to enable it effectively to execute its mandate.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation continue to be the primary challenges confronting the international community. We concur with the Secretary-General's observation that the two are interlinked and mutually reinforcing, and therefore stress that a progressive process of nuclear disarmament is the sine qua non for the effective enforcement of nuclear non-proliferation. Focusing on one to the neglect of the other is a recipe for the further exacerbation of the current fragile international security environment. Indeed, the unsuccessful conclusion of the 2005 NPT Review Conference and the absence of disarmament and non-proliferation issues in the outcome document would seem to buttress that view.

Despite its shortcomings, the NPT has been widely acclaimed as the fulcrum for the attainment of the global non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. Undoubtedly, the lack of compliance with the provisions of the Treaty and attempts to delink the tripod that underpins its spirit and letter — disarmament, non-proliferation and the peaceful use of nuclear technology — have placed considerable stress on the NPT and contributed to the current erosion of its credibility and effectiveness. While the majority of non-nuclear States have remained faithful to their commitments, the same, regrettably, cannot be said of the nuclear-weapon States. That asymmetrical environment cannot prevail in perpetuity and must be rectified. Ghana therefore joins other countries in calling on the nuclear-weapon States to abide by their commitments under article VI of the Treaty, which was

reaffirmed in the sixth step of the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference.

The continued possession of nuclear weapons by the "5 + 3" States impedes not only the efforts to make the acquisition and use of nuclear weapons anathema, but also the pursuance of tough enforcement of non-proliferation rules. If nuclear weapons are legitimate and of profound value to those States, it is evident that those on the threshold will feel entitled to join the club. The irreversible and sufficiently verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons would therefore be a positive development in our quest to save succeeding generations from the scourge of a nuclear holocaust.

The quest for universal adherence to the NPT is of the utmost importance to Ghana. In that connection, we consider the recent undertaking by North Korea to rejoin the Treaty as a laudable gesture worthy of emulation by non-States parties, as it would inject new blood into the NPT.

A grave concern to my delegation is the perennial issue of negative security assurances. The fear among the majority of States regarding the proliferation of nuclear weapons could be assuaged if Security Council resolution 984 (1995) were affirmed by a legally binding document, as rightly stipulated in paragraph 8 of Decision 2 of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference. Legally binding security assurances by nuclear-weapon States to non-nuclear-weapon States would impact positively on the NPT, with its attendant effect on disarmament and non-proliferation.

We remain convinced that nuclear-weapon-free zones are critical components of our common aspiration for a weapons-free world. We have witnessed laudable progress towards that end, as evidenced by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba. We therefore enjoin nuclear-weapon States to support the efforts of non-nuclear-weapon States to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones and implement their corresponding obligations. In that connection, we applaud Mexico for hosting the April 2005 Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, and hope that the exchange of ideas and decisions taken will consolidate the existing nuclear-weapon-free zones, serve as a stimulus for the creation of similar zones in other regions, and, ultimately, enhance our common goal of nuclear disarmament.

The quest to promote human security will be a mirage unless the community of nations comprehensively addresses the menace of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The illicit trade, which generates over $1 billion annually, poses a grave danger to peace and security due to their easy availability to criminals, drug traffickers and terrorists.

In that regard, despite my Government's preference for a legally binding instrument, we join other like-minded States in welcoming as a positive development the consensus instrument to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons in a timely manner. It is the hope of my delegation that the instrument will eventually be transformed from its current political and voluntary nature into a legally binding instrument. Such a transformation would affirm our commitment to ending the infamous activities of those who have turned wanton deaths into a lucrative business.

Successive Human Development Reports have invariably underscored the inextricable links between disarmament and development. It is crystal clear that humankind stands to derive enormous benefit from disarmament, not only in the realm of peace and security, but also in the area of socio-economic development. It is morally wrong and an indictment of the community of nations that, while over $1 trillion is spent annually on weapons of death, half the world continues to suffer from acute poverty and deprivation, the fundamental factors that promote and foster terrorism, the bane of the twenty-first century. The development goals enshrined in the outcome document could be attained with only a minimum fraction of global military expenditure.

The gloomy developments in the disarmament regime over the past year place an enormous responsibility on this Committee as it seeks measures to meet the aspirations of humankind for a peaceful and secure world. Although the challenges are daunting, we should be able to rise to the occasion, as long as we have determination, political will and unanimity of purpose. Otherwise, we risk being accused by the very people we represent here of being insensitive to their concerns.

Mr. Le Luong Minh (Viet Nam): I would like to begin, Mr. Chairman, by congratulating you and the other members of the Bureau on your respective

elections and assuring you of the full support and cooperation of the delegation of Viet Nam.

My delegation fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the countries members of the Non-Aligned Movement and the statement to be delivered by the representative of Myanmar on behalf of the member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

In the generally bleak disarmament picture of the past year that I will describe in more detail, we see some bright spots. We are pleased to note the adoption of some specific measures to promote implementation of the Biological Weapons Convention and the Chemical Weapons Convention: those aimed at developing national capacity to mitigate infectious and deliberately spread diseases and avoiding misuse. The outcome of the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is also positive. More and more States are moving closer towards ratifying the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status was declared, and commitments were made by five Central Asian States to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, which took place in Mexico last May, reaffirmed the belief in nuclear-weapon-free zones as an important nuclear disarmament measure. These are positive developments that should be encouraged as we undertake a more thorough review of the disarmament situation of the past year.

Having mentioned these positive developments, we cannot deny that the past year generally has not been a good year for disarmament. The arms race continues, with estimated global military expenditures reaching a new height and new challenges and threats causing international concern. With the limited progress we see in the reduction of the number of deployed nuclear weapons, the rest of the nuclear disarmament picture is not rosy. Thousands of nuclear weapons exist, many on alert status. And, although the International Court of Justice has issued an advisory opinion concerning the legality of the threat or use of nuclear weapons, we are alarmed at the emergence of new security doctrines that give an even broader role to nuclear weapons.

In the face of this situation, deadlocks remain at the most important multilateral disarmament forum. The Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral disarmament negotiating body, is still unable to engage in any substantive negotiation. The Disarmament Commission has not even been able to agree on an agenda for its work. The seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held last May, failed to reach agreement on any substantive issue. The omission of a section on disarmament and non-proliferation from the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the recent High-level Plenary Meeting of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, thus resulting in the absence of any reflection of the concerns, interests and political will of the majority of Member States, only adds to the disappointment of the international community. This overall situation offers no healthy reason for celebration.

The question is: where shall we go from here? The responsibility to ensure peace and security for our own peoples — indeed, for the very survival of humankind — does not allow us to let the present situation endure. We should have been better equipped with a more comprehensive outcome document. This not being the case does not mean we do not have sound guidelines to follow. The United Nations Charter, the many multilateral disarmament treaties and the numerous resolutions and decisions adopted by review conferences and by the General Assembly constitute a solid basis for our actions.

The question remains: do we all want to move forward? In this connection, let me quote the Secretary-General, from his report on the work of the Organization: "Multilateral instruments to prevent proliferation and to promote disarmament must be revitalized if they are to continue to contribute to international peace and security" (*A/60/1, para. 75*).

Over the past decades, the Non-Aligned Movement has always stood at the forefront in the struggle for disarmament. The Vietnamese delegation totally shares the Non-Aligned Movement's view, which stresses the importance of the multilateral disarmament machinery in dealing with questions of

disarmament and other related international security issues and underlines the need to strengthen it.

The Vietnamese delegation joins the majority of Member States in reiterating our common position that nuclear weapons continue to pose the most serious threat to international peace and security, and that nuclear disarmament therefore remains our highest priority. While political will to achieve nuclear disarmament is necessary on the part of all States, it is particularly so on the part of the States that possess nuclear weapons, given their obligation under article VI of the NPT to engage in faithful negotiations with a view to putting an end to the nuclear arms race and totally eliminating nuclear weapons. The decision in 1995 to extend this Treaty indefinitely was based on the commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to fulfil that obligation. In fact, at the 2000 Review Conference, they did indeed give an unequivocal undertaking that they would do so. We call upon the nuclear-weapon States to honour their commitments. Pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, efforts for the conclusion of a universal, unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States should be pursued as a matter of priority.

Towards this end, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission must be allowed to carry out their mandates. The United Nations must continue to play the central role in this connection. We support the call for convening an international conference on nuclear disarmament.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones has been a positive step towards accomplishing the ultimate goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. While welcoming the positive developments in that connection, as mentioned above, we join the call for continued efforts to implement the resolution adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference on making the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons.

One of the most important factors in determining the effectiveness of nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties is the participation of nuclear-weapon States in the relevant protocols to those treaties. We welcome China's readiness to sign the protocol to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone and urge the other nuclear-weapon States to do the same.

With the increasing danger of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction falling into the hands of terrorists, we see the necessity for, and we support, measures to strengthen the non-proliferation regime, including measures to ensure compliance. However, those measures must be applied on an equal footing, without discrimination and with respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States. Furthermore, a balance must be maintained between compliance measures and measures that ensure respect for developing countries' right to technical assistance and access to research on, as well as production and use of, nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

With complex developments before us and with the serious lack of progress, the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is imperative in order to review and assess the implementation of the first special session devoted to disarmament and to chart the way forward. We join many other delegations in calling on the Assembly to reconvene the Open-ended Working Group tasked with finding practical ways to hold the special session as soon as possible, and we look forward to actively participating in its work.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, let me assure you of Viet Nam's willingness to work closely with all other member States in advancing towards our lofty ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament.

Mr. Kazykhanov (Kazakhstan): At the outset, let me extend my congratulations to you, Mr. Chairman, and to the other members of the Bureau, on your election to guide the work of the First Committee. I am confidant that, under your able stewardship, substantive progress will be made in addressing important issues on the Committee's agenda.

Regrettably, this has been a difficult and challenging year. The 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) failed to set up a balanced and comprehensive mechanism that would facilitate the strengthening of the international non-proliferation regime and the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. Even more disturbing is the omission of clear recommendations on non-proliferation and disarmament in the outcome document of the 2005 world summit (resolution 60/1).

The process of negotiations on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation has become highly politicized owing to attempts by certain States to build

their national security at the expense of the interests of other States. In our view, such a position is highly irresponsible. Today, challenges and threats — including those involving the uncontrolled spread of nuclear weapons and the risk of their falling into the hands of terrorists — have grown many-fold. The elimination of those threats requires joint, well-coordinated and effective action at all levels. The First Committee remains a very important forum to deal with these issues.

Universalization of all agreements in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation is of crucial importance. In that regard, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons remains one of the pillars of global security and needs to be reinforced and protected.

We welcome the results of the fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty and urge the Governments of those States that have not yet signed or ratified that instrument to display their political will and genuine commitment in favour of nuclear disarmament.

An early start of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty should be the next step in the multilateral disarmament process.

This year, we marked the tenth anniversary of the removal from the territory of Kazakhstan of the last nuclear warhead. Thus, my country has made a tangible contribution to the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Kazakhstan is also actively involved in negotiations to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

As the site of the former Semipalatinsk nuclear testing ground, my country once again urges the international community to support the adoption of a further General Assembly resolution on the rehabilitation of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan.

Kazakhstan welcomes efforts to implement Security Council resolution 1540 (2004), on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). We are convinced that all States should take measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring WMDs or their components. The Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction represents an essential contribution to the strengthening of the non-proliferation regime.

My country calls for the establishment and enhancement of controls over nuclear, chemical and biological materials and their production technologies. Kazakhstan recognizes the special role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). It is time to establish similar effective bodies within the framework of the international Conventions on chemical and biological weapons.

We are strongly convinced that outer space should be used only for peaceful purposes. Therefore, we support initiatives to formulate a legally binding instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space and on the threat or use of force against space objects.

Kazakhstan is a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and has joined the Hague Code of Conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. Kazakhstan has also applied for membership in the Missile Technology Control Regime.

It is regrettable that after three sessions the Open-Ended Working Group on tracing illicit small arms and light weapons has failed to conclude negotiations on an instrument that is legally binding. Nonetheless, the international community should not relax its efforts to combat illegal trafficking in conventional arms.

Global security and disarmament are hardly possible without appropriate measures to strengthen regional security. Our country is actively working on issues related to the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICA). The CICA process is gaining momentum and has already become an important factor in international relations today.

Kazakhstan is satisfied with the level of cooperation between Central Asian States and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Government of Kazakhstan recently made a voluntary contribution of $20,000 to support the Centre's activities.

We support further universalization and enhancement of counter-terrorist treaty mechanisms. Kazakhstan's signing of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism is a practical reaffirmation of that position. We are looking forward to the early completion of a comprehensive

convention against international terrorism. It is also important to note that broad measures against terrorism are being taken within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, and the Commonwealth of Independent States.

Finally, I would like once again to affirm our full support for all First Committee efforts to strengthen the non-proliferation regime and promote security at the regional and global levels. My delegation stands ready to work together to achieve our common goals.

Mr. Acharya (Nepal): Mr. Chairman, allow me to express my warm congratulations on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau on their well deserved election. I also express appreciation to Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his comprehensive statement at the 2nd meeting.

My delegation fully associates itself with the statement made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, which reflects its commitment to global disarmament, peace and security.

Nepal has always believed that the international community must work together for peaceful coexistence, collective security and disarmament, as they constitute the fundamental pillars of international peace and stability. These objectives can be achieved only if we make genuine progress in disarmament and eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the face of the earth.

Nepal has consistently maintained that all weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical, biological and radiological weapons, should be eliminated in a time-bound manner. We are firmly convinced that, unless we achieve that goal, humanity's aspiration to live in a world of peace and security will remain a distant dream. However, at the High-level Plenary Meeting, we were unable to agree to incorporate the issues of disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document (resolution 60/1). It is also disappointing that the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) could not make headway on non-proliferation, including attaining the objective of the universality of the Convention.

Notwithstanding those apparent setbacks, we should pick up the pieces and work together to attain the cherished goal of comprehensive disarmament. This can be realized through collective efforts, including bilateral, subregional, regional and multilateral efforts.

Nepal supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in every part of the world. The expansion and consolidation of such zones will provide strong building blocks for confidence-building in the areas of collective security, peace and disarmament. My delegation supports the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South-East Asia and in the Middle East. We believe these would create an atmosphere conducive to disarmament.

No less serious threat to international peace and security emanates from the illicit use and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, particularly the danger of their acquisition by criminals and international terrorist groups. My delegation, therefore, strongly calls for concrete collaborative measures to prevent such weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists.

We firmly believe that the regional centres for peace and disarmament can make an important contribution to the global disarmament campaign by way of confidence-building, transparency and advocacy at the regional and subregional levels. As host to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, we would like to see the Centre play a more constructive and proactive role to move the Kathmandu Process forward towards peace and disarmament in the region. His Majesty's Government of Nepal is committed to relocating the Centre from United Nations Headquarters, from where it now carrying out its activities, to Kathmandu. His Majesty's Government of Nepal has demonstrated flexibility and has shown its eagerness to sign the host country agreement by accommodating the concerns of the Secretariat. We strongly reiterate our desire to relocate the Centre to Kathmandu and to make it operational within the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. We call upon the Secretariat to conclude the agreement as soon as possible.

At a time when global disarmament negotiations are in jeopardy, we must strive to continue our efforts at every level and on every front to rekindle the aspirations of humanity to get rid of the real menace

posed by deadly weapons. In the daunting task of achieving the goals of peace, security and disarmament, we should work collectively, just as we all must work together in the fight against international terrorism.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): I am pleased to express my sincere congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the First Committee. I am confident that your vast experience and skill will enable us to attain success in our work. I thank Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for the statement he made at the beginning of the Committee's deliberations (*see A/C.1/60/PV.2*). I reaffirm that we shall cooperate in order to reach the best possible results in the work of the First Committee.

My delegation endorses the statement made at the 2nd meeting by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

It is no secret that the international political situation does not augur well for the future. We are saddened by the international peace and security climate, in which might prevails over right, injustice over justice and war over peace. Intensive efforts have been made to weaken and marginalize the United Nations — an Organization that was founded to save peoples from the scourge of war.

The justification for stockpiling weapons of mass destruction, with its huge attendant expenditures, has come to an end for all nations. Pre-emptive wars are not feasible; they result in considerable cost in lives and property, and they prove that the present international security situation is only exacerbated through military solutions. We should therefore pool our sincere efforts and our true political will and should respect international law and work within a multilateral framework that can bring about sustainable, balanced international stability.

Some might say that the outcome of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, held in 1978, at which the international community set its priorities in the serious endeavour to bring about nuclear disarmament, has become outmoded and anachronistic. In fact, that does it an enormous injustice. We must return to the Final Document of that session (*resolution S-10/2*) and to what has been achieved since. Here, we must stress the imperative of holding a fourth special session devoted to disarmament to conduct a comprehensive assessment of this issue and address the related failures and shortcomings and their underlying reasons.

The Conference on Disarmament was entrusted with the task of negotiating nuclear disarmament within a specific agenda; here, there have been many failures and very few success stories. It has made no progress in its main task: that of a multilateral deliberative forum to bring about a legally binding nuclear disarmament instrument within a specific time frame. This is due to efforts by some Powers to impede this global endeavour, and to a lack of the necessary political will to bring it about. The Conference has been prevented from fulfilling its mandate, and unjustifiable double standards have been applied in matters of disarmament at a time when nuclear arsenals are being developed, stockpiles of nuclear weapons are increasing and new types of nuclear weapons are being developed — in addition to the threat of their use. Sometimes pressure is exerted on some countries to stop them from possessing the means to defend their security and sovereignty, a right that is safeguarded by the United Nations Charter, international law and current international agreements and conventions.

At a time we are aspiring to general and complete nuclear disarmament and to the universality of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), Israel is being totally overlooked. That country possesses nuclear weapons outside the NPT regime; in fact, assistance is being provided to it while States parties to the NPT are banned from using nuclear technology for peaceful purposes and for development.

In the Middle East, Israel continues its hostile expansionist policies, supporting its efforts with a huge arsenal of all kinds of conventional and non-conventional arms and weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons. Israel controls a dangerous military nuclear programme that, in the absence of any effective international control or even an international response, threatens the security of the region and the rest of the world. Therefore, the Middle East remains more vulnerable to threats and falsifications than any other region of the world.

Syria was one of the first countries to propose the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, and has worked strenuously to achieve that

objective. Syria has contributed to many initiatives to that end — including most recently a draft resolution that we submitted to the Security Council on behalf of the Arab Group on 29 December 2003 (*see A/58/667*) aimed at the establishment in the Middle East of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction, in particular nuclear weapons, under collective international control and under United Nations auspices. The draft resolution was also intended to promote multilateral disarmament agreements.

The failure to adopt the Arab peace initiative has encouraged Israel to persist in it refusal to adhere to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and to subject all its nuclear activities and facilities to the comprehensive safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In that connection, we hope that the next NPT review conference will adopt an unambiguous demand that Israel adhere to the NPT and that it will find an effective mechanism to attain that objective in order to achieve stability and a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

The United Nations remains the only forum for sincere multilateral efforts to attain the objective to which we all aspire: the elimination of weapons of mass destruction of all kinds, particularly nuclear weapons, so that humanity will never again be able to use such weapons. In that context, we should like to express our grave concern that the failure of the 2005 NPT Review Conference to achieve any results that would strengthen that non-proliferation and disarmament regime.

Moreover, the outcome document (*resolution 60/1*) of the High-level Plenary Meeting failed to mention the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with regard to nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction. We agree with others that the only positive result of the NPT Review Conference was that it did not retreat from what was achieved in 1995 and 2000. There are many dangers ahead, and we must face them. Therefore, we must not allow facts to be falsified, new priorities to be established or Machiavellian pressures and double standards to be applied.

The fact is that the danger posed by weapons of mass destruction will be present as long as those weapons exist. That is why it is so important that we eliminate them everywhere they may be, thereby preventing their proliferation, so that humanity will never again suffer their devastating effects.

The meeting rose at 4.15 p.m.

United Nations A/C.1/60/PV.5

General Assembly
Sixtieth session

Official Records

First Committee
5th meeting
Wednesday, 5 October 2005, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. Choi Young-jin ..... (Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Organization of work

The Chairman: Before the Committee continues its general debate, I should like to make some comments regarding the next phase of the Committee's work.

Let me first remind all delegations again that the deadline for submission of draft resolutions under all disarmament and international security agenda items is next Wednesday, 12 October, at 6 p.m. Delegations are requested to submit their draft resolutions by the deadline in order to enable the Secretariat to make them available to the Committee as official documents as soon as possible.

Now, let us briefly discuss the second phase of the Committee's work. In connection with the preparations for the second phase of the Committee's work — the thematic discussion on item subjects and the introduction and consideration of draft resolutions — an indicative timetable was circulated yesterday afternoon as document A/C.1/60/CRP.2. In preparing the indicative timetable, I largely followed the practice already established by the Committee during previous sessions of the General Assembly. I would like to propose that we carry out our discussions for the second phase in the following manner.

First, during the first week of the thematic discussions, the meetings on 10 and 11 October will be dedicated to questions related to nuclear weapons. As indicated in document A/C.1/60/CRP.2, however, it is my intention, with the agreement of the Committee, to allow the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to make a statement during the latter part of the meeting on Monday afternoon in order to accommodate his schedule. Secondly, the meeting on 12 October will be dedicated to other weapons of mass destruction and to outer space, focusing on disarmament aspects. Thirdly, the two meetings on 13 and 14 October will be devoted to questions concerning conventional weapons. Fourthly, starting with the second week of thematic discussions, on the morning of 17 October we will discuss regional disarmament and security, and other disarmament measures and international security. Finally, on 18 October the Committee will discuss the issue of disarmament machinery.

As can be seen from the note at the bottom of document A/C.1/60/CRP.2, it is my intention to divide the seven formal meetings into three segments so that the Committee can fully utilize the time allocated to it by engaging in productive discussions and by introducing all the draft resolutions in an efficient and timely manner. Some meetings in the first segment will start with a guest speaker, as indicated in the conference room paper. After the speaker makes his or her opening statement, I will briefly suspend the formal meeting so that we can have an informal question-and-answer session with the guest speaker. Afterwards, we shall resume the formal meeting and proceed to the second segment, which will consist of interventions by delegations on the specific subject under consideration.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

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Although 35 years have passed since adoption of the NPT, the results are still disappointing, and the dangers linked to these weapons persist.

The arsenals of the nuclear Powers contain tens of thousands of nuclear weapons, and thousands of them remain on maximum alert. More alarming still is that no tangible progress has to date been recorded in the realm of nuclear disarmament. The objectives set forth in the NPT have not been achieved, least of all that of creating a world free of nuclear weapons. Non-nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have committed themselves to not developing or acquiring nuclear weapons in return for a commitment by nuclear-weapon Powers to negotiate in good faith to achieve nuclear disarmament. So long as the nuclear Powers do not live up to that commitment, the non-proliferation system remains in jeopardy.

My delegation stresses the need to reinvigorate the Conference on Disarmament and immediately to begin negotiations within an ad hoc committee to conclude a treaty banning the production and stockpiling of fissile materials for nuclear weapons. Such a treaty must be non-discriminatory and fully and effectively verifiable. We reaffirm the principle of multilateralism in dealing with disarmament issues, through the strengthening of the multilateral disarmament machinery; that is the only way to achieve general and complete disarmament.

My country attaches utmost importance to the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in all parts of the world. These are a positive force for strengthening international peace and security. In spite of the international community's efforts to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction, Israel still possesses military nuclear facilities and hundreds of nuclear warheads that pose a grave threat to peace and security, not only in the Middle East but also in Europe, West Asia and Africa. This constitutes an absolute challenge to and total disregard of the international community and its will, as repeatedly expressed through resolutions and decisions adopted in the United Nations and other relevant regional and international organizations. More than ever before, the international community, and in particular the nuclear-weapon States, must shoulder their full responsibility and put pressure on Israel, using all means at their disposal to oblige it to sign the NPT and become a party to other relevant treaties, as well as to commit itself unreservedly to the comprehensive safeguards system of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This has to happen if the international community sincerely wishes to fight terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including nuclear terrorism.

My country still suffers greatly from a variety of problems related to landmines that are relics of previous wars. According to United Nations estimates, at least 10 million mines have lain buried on Libyan territory ever since the Second World War. They have killed or maimed thousands of our innocent citizens and have hamstrung development projects in the vast areas that were planted with mines. Here, we stress the need for those countries that laid the mines to shoulder their responsibility and immediately provide my country with all maps and other information regarding the mines and compensate the victims and their families for the damage and suffering the mines have caused. My country must also receive compensation for the lingering effects of hamstrung development plans in and near the many mined areas.

My delegation reaffirms its call for the Mediterranean basin to be transformed into a zone of peace, where all its peoples can live in mutual respect and harmony. This cannot be achieved until all foreign fleets have been withdrawn and military bases dismantled, and the sovereignty of all States throughout the region respected, and until there are guarantees that there will be no interference in internal affairs and no threat or imposition of sanctions.

We reaffirm our forceful condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including State terrorism. It is our view that eliminating this phenomenon requires a clear United Nations definition of terrorism, taking into account its root causes, including foreign occupation and its negative effects and heinous practices against occupied populations, in addition to economic and political injustice. We must draw a distinction between terrorist acts, on the one hand, and the right to self-determination, and the right to fight foreign occupation on the other. Libya was one of the first countries to call for an international conference to define terrorism, determine its causes and find ways to fight it effectively. Libya is a signatory and party to all international and regional counter-terrorism conventions.

Finally, my delegation reaffirms its readiness to cooperate fully with all other members to make general

and complete disarmament a reality, thus creating a world where peace and stability reign.

Mr. Vohidov (Uzbekistan) (spoke in Russian): At the outset, Sir, let me join in congratulating you upon your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. I assure you and the other members of the Bureau of the full support of the delegation of Uzbekistan for your efforts to carry out the activities of the Committee effectively and constructively.

This year, we have witnessed major regional and multilateral efforts to bolster the process of non-proliferation and disarmament, including by enhancing the effectiveness of existing multilateral mechanisms. Unfortunately, the international community failed to make use of the chance that was offered to take significant decisions at the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and at the recent United Nations summit. Our expectations in terms of seeking ways to reduce the role of nuclear weapons in today's international relations have not been met. As we see it, the primary reason for this is that, while Member States unequivocally condemn the threat of the spread of weapons of mass destruction, they differ in their assessments of the importance of fighting the root causes of the spread of this weaponry and the factors contributing to it.

However, this does not mean that the process of non-proliferation and disarmament is at an impasse. Opportunities continue to exist for States to take immediate, effective measures to prevent the erosion of the regime of nuclear controls. In our view, the following factors should form the basis of a quest for compromise as we address the issue of strengthening the non-proliferation and disarmament process.

First, any efforts in this area must be undertaken exclusively on a multilateral basis, taking into account the views of the majority of Member States. Unilateral, imposed norms or rules can only deepen the rift in the international community on issues of non-proliferation and disarmament.

Secondly, major conditions for peace and stability are the implementation of commitments under international security treaties and the strengthening of the international machinery for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs). In our view, this could be the starting point for further multilateral talks.

Thirdly, the growing black market in nuclear materials and technologies is cause for concern, as are the broadening scope of activities of terrorist groups and attempts by them to acquire WMD components. In this regard, we advocate continued strengthening of the regime established under Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on denying access by non-State actors to WMD. And we join in the appeal to bring about the prompt entry into force of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Fourthly, the role of non-nuclear States in international relations must continue to increase. Further efforts in this area, we believe, should be aimed at establishing a system of universal and unconditional security safeguards for non-nuclear States. In this regard, Uzbekistan welcomes the outcome of the first Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in April in Mexico.

Finally, particular attention must be devoted to new ideas and proposals aimed at strengthening the process of non-proliferation and disarmament. In this context, Uzbekistan supports the initiative of Norway and six other countries representing various regions of the world (see A/60/415), aimed at enhancing collective security against growing nuclear threats.

Uzbekistan is firm in its commitments under international non-proliferation and disarmament treaties, and it advocates strengthening the role of multilateral United Nations mechanisms in this area. An important focus of our foreign policy is the construction of a new element in regional security: a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia. The States of the region base this concept on three elements: ensuring the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons; addressing environmental issues related to past nuclear activities; and safeguarding the right to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. The establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region would be an effective contribution to strengthening the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. Specifically, it would help to strengthen the NPT and to counter nuclear terrorism.

We note the contributions of the Department for Disarmament Affairs and the Office of Legal Affairs of the United Nations and of the International Atomic Energy Agency to the drafting of the text for a Central Asian nuclear-weapon-free zone treaty. We call once

again on nuclear countries to work towards a common position with States of the region on this issue.

In conclusion, let me express our hope that the work of the First Committee will qualitatively differ from the results of the NPT Review Conference and the 2005 world summit with respect to international security, non-proliferation and disarmament. We believe that the difficulties that Member States have faced in taking decisions at this year's major conferences should not be allowed to hamper the First Committee's efforts to reach a new consensus on international security issues.

The delegation of Uzbekistan expresses its readiness to cooperate with all other members to succeed in that undertaking.

Mr. Sealy (Trinidad and Tobago): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) that are Members of the United Nations.

We wish to express our pleasure, Sir, at seeing you chairing the First Committee. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau on their election and assure you of CARICOM's active and constructive participation in the First Committee's deliberations as we collectively tackle key outstanding issues in the area of disarmament and international security at this historic sixtieth session of the General Assembly.

We also wish to thank Mr. Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, for his statement at the outset of the work of the Committee. We have taken note of the measures that he has proposed, and we look forward to working with like-minded delegations to bring about the full realization of the goals and objectives for disarmament and non-proliferation.

CARICOM delegations that are members of the Non-Aligned Movement fully align themselves with the statement made by the delegation of Indonesia on behalf of the Movement.

It should be recalled that in the United Nations system, both the General Assembly and the Security Council have competence in matters of disarmament. Article 11, paragraph 1, of the United Nations Charter states that the General Assembly may consider

> "the principles governing disarmament and the regulation of armaments and may make recommendations with regard to such principles to the Members or to the Security Council or to both".

And Article 26 states that

> "the Security Council shall be responsible for formulating, with the assistance of the Military Staff Committee referred to in Article 47, plans to be submitted to the Members of the United Nations for the establishment of a system for the regulation of armaments".

One may ask how well the General Assembly, which is the most representative organ of the international community, has fulfilled its Charter mandate in the field of disarmament and arms control over the past 60 years. There is no doubt that we have made some progress in that time. In 1959, for example, by its resolution 1378 (XIV), the General Assembly endorsed the goal of general and complete disarmament under effective international control. Since then, we have adopted numerous General Assembly resolutions, requested many reports, held special sessions devoted to disarmament and established specialized deliberative and negotiating disarmament machinery.

The General Assembly has also been instrumental in exhorting States members of the international community to become parties to various multilateral treaties such as the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water; the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT); the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC); the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC); the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT); the Ottawa Convention on anti-personnel landmines; and the treaties establishing nuclear-weapon-free zones. All those multilaterally agreed disarmament instruments have served to protect humanity from the threat of annihilation by nuclear war, from a more painful, slower death from the effects of chemical or biological warfare and from being maimed.

But we need to do more — in fact, significantly more — if we are to save the present and succeeding generations from the horrors of a war fought with weapons of mass destruction and from the threat of radiological and nuclear terrorism. In that regard, CARICOM delegations note that the recently adopted International Convention for the Suppression of Acts

of Nuclear Terrorism fills an important lacuna in the corpus of international law aimed at establishing a criminal law regime to deal adequately with acts of terrorism.

We must also do more to reanimate global disarmament leadership and recharge it with the political will and the determination necessary to ensure that the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission, the Conference on Disarmament and the NPT and other review conferences, which constitute our crucial multilateral disarmament machinery, are capable of effectively and efficiently discharging their respective mandates and thus of overcoming the deadlock and the impasse in which they find themselves.

In that regard, CARICOM delegations are disappointed at the failure of the May 2005 NPT Review Conference to produce tangible and substantive results, and we are equally disappointed at the failure of the High-level Plenary Meeting to address the important global issue of disarmament and international security in the 2005 World Summit Outcome (resolution 60/1).

We have spoken enough in these hallowed halls. All that needs to be said has been said. We should now move to the stage of the implementation of resolutions adopted on the recommendation of the First Committee. We continue to live in an insecure world and have yet to build a world free from fear. In his special comment published in issue No. 1, 2004, of the Disarmament Forum of the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, the Secretary-General writes,

> "The need for progress in the field of disarmament is therefore as great today as it has ever been. Indeed, given the combination of old and new threats that we face, the world cannot safely endure another half century without major progress on disarmament".

Accordingly, CARICOM delegations are of the view that urgent steps must be taken to rid the world of the tens of thousands of nuclear weapons in existence. That is a responsibility and an international duty of the five declared nuclear-weapon States stemming from the clear legal obligation established in article VI of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

CARICOM is of the view that there must be universal adherence to, and implementation of, the NPT, the CWC, the BWC and the CTBT in order to spare us the danger of a nuclear, chemical or biological holocaust by design or by accident and to put a halt to the qualitative improvement of weapons of mass destruction. CARICOM is also of the view that there must be a drastic reduction in the annual spending on arms, which was estimated as exceeding the astronomical figure of $1 trillion in 2004, while billions of people struggle to survive in abject poverty on less than $1 per day.

CARICOM is of the view that the maritime transport of radioactive wastes must be halted, particularly along Caribbean sea lanes, as that practice poses an additional threat to those zones' already inherent vulnerability to exogenous shocks. In addition, an effective liability and compensation regime must be established.

Finally, CARICOM delegations are of the view that an end must be put to the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons, which cause so much death and destruction in various conflicts all over the world and which, in many of our societies, fuel high levels of crime and personal insecurity.

In that context, CARICOM delegations would have preferred the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, which would have served as a good legal basis for cooperation among law enforcement and other authorities in detecting the point of diversion of those arms from the legal to the illicit trade.

All those objectives can and must be attained through a thoroughly overhauled, revitalized and strengthened United Nations multilateral disarmament machinery which allows each organ to play its role fully and not to be stymied in the discharge of its weighty responsibilities by the narrow national self interests of a few. We must seek consensus, but consensus must not be an excuse for inaction. We need new ideas, specific plans and projects and forward-looking proposals, as well as the necessary flexibility so that we can negotiate compromises.

CARICOM stands ready to work with other States and the relevant United Nations institutions in achieving solutions to all of those issues. In that regard, CARICOM delegations welcome the regional efforts of United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, and we look forward to increased

cooperation and assistance in areas pertinent to disarmament and development in the Caribbean.

Let us therefore rededicate ourselves, on the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, to implementing the General Assembly's Charter mandate in the field of disarmament and arms regulation so that we can live in and bequeath to future generations a more peaceful, stable and secure world. Let us commit ourselves immediately to give new direction and meaning to our work by making maximum use of the Open-ended Working Group charged with making preparations for the holding of a fourth special session of the General Assembly on disarmament and by imbuing that process with a renewed, reinvigorated and dynamic agenda aimed at finding new common ground on disarmament, verification of disarmament processes, arms control, non-proliferation and related international security matters.

Mr. Yushkevich (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): On behalf of the delegation of the Republic of Belarus, let me congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. You may count on our support and cooperation in your work.

This year the durability of the international security system — that has developed alongside the United Nations — continued to be tested, and its performance has become another argument in favour of the need for reform. Phenomena that quite recently we cautiously called "emerging negative trends" in diplomatic language are becoming recognized realities. One such reality were the increased differences regarding the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The 2005 NPT Review Conference yet again demonstrated the lack of common views and approaches to address nuclear non-proliferation.

Belarus has demonstrated its interest in strengthening the international regime of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, enhancing the role of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and strengthening mutual trust. On the eve of the sixtieth session of the General Assembly, the President of the Republic of Belarus took the decision to sign the Additional Protocol to its IAEA Safeguards Agreement pursuant to the NPT. Recognizing the serious risks of the use of nuclear technology by terrorists and the need for urgent collective action by the international community to fight international terrorism, Belarus has signed the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism.

Unfortunately, the list of things that still need to be done to eradicate the nuclear threat is not growing any shorter. An important agenda item continues to be the prohibition of the production of fissile materials for nuclear weapons or other nuclear devices. The Conference on Disarmament needs to start negotiations on that issue as soon as possible.

Let me express the hope that the recent Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty could give new political momentum to the ratification process for that Treaty. Effectively resolving problems related to existing weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and the possible development of new types of such weapons is, in our view, one of the key tasks facing the United Nations and the First Committee. It is a long and difficult road from developing WMDs to recognizing the threat they pose to peace and then establishing effective universal international monitoring mechanisms. The cost of that journey is extremely high: great loss of human life; economic resources diverted from development; and years of international exertion to ameliorate the situation and control and eliminate WMDs. In that regard, Belarus will submit a draft resolution entitled "Prohibition of the development and manufacture of new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons" for consideration by the First Committee. We hope for the support of members and request interested delegations to consider becoming sponsors.

Hotbeds of tension exist in various regions of the world, and some continue to grow. In those hotspots, it is not rare for might to be used to make right. Conventional weapons and mines constantly claim new victims. We are convinced that the only sure way to resolve those problems is through a multilateral approach, requiring the joint efforts of the entire international community. Our country attaches great importance to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and welcomes the June 2005 adoption of a draft political instrument on marking and tracing small arms and light weapons. That document reflects the varying approaches and financial and technical capabilities of States to implement its provisions.

Belarus continues to advocate universalization of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction. We are fully complying with our obligations under that Convention. In that connection, we would like to thank States and organizations that are assisting Belarus to resolve issues relating to the destruction of its stockpiles of anti-personnel mines.

Today, against the backdrop of criticism of the United Nations, and Organization which personifies the multilateral, global approach to resolving questions of peace and security, many States are looking to regional and subregional military and political alliances and organizations to guarantee their security. Belarus believes that the regional approach to security is important and necessary. This year our country had the opportunity to demonstrate its vision of how to resolve international security issues during our chairmanship of the Forum for Security Cooperation of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

Also of great importance for regional security is the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO), which has observer status in the General Assembly. Over the past year the CSTO conducted a joint anti-drug operation and coordinated efforts on post-conflict development of Afghanistan, and it has been unifying its peacekeeping capability.

One foreign policy priority for Belarus is to develop regional and bilateral confidence-building measures and active cooperation with neighbouring States in order to establish a belt of good-neighbourliness and security. At the same time, we understand that the destructive force of weapons of mass destruction, the presence of advanced conventional weapons systems and the nearly universal access to weaponry, including small arms and light weapons mean that the regional approach is important but must, above all, be viewed as a component of the global approach. In our view, it was that kind of global, universal approach that was the basis for the ministerial declaration on disarmament issued by seven countries (A/60/415, annex). We regret that the delegation's provisions have not enjoyed universal recognition in the United Nations.

We are certain that the First Committee will continue to be an effective United Nations forum in the area of international security, disarmament and non-proliferation. It has a full agenda and is capable of taking specific decisions in the interests of the entire international community.

In conclusion, I wish all members of the Committee a successful and constructive session.

Mr. Dauth (Australia): The Australian delegation congratulates you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of the Committee. I suppose it is something of a double-edged sword for you. But I always like to have friends in high places, so I am delighted to see such a good friend in that position. I can assure you that we very much look forward to working closely with you over the coming weeks.

It would be wrong if I did not begin by expressing our deepest sympathy to the Government and the people of Indonesia — as we have done with respect to many other places — on the terrorist attacks in Bali over the weekend, which claimed the lives of a number of Australians as well. These terrible events are a reminder of the continuing threat that terrorism poses to all of us.

A year ago, we looked forward to two major opportunities — the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the United Nations summit just held — to make our world more secure through action on non-proliferation and disarmament. Today, however, I think we have to acknowledge that the international community squandered those two opportunities. The failure to strengthen efforts against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is a particular concern, given what we know to be terrorists' desire to acquire and use such weapons. We should be quite clear: multilateral processes cannot waste opportunities in that way and remain a viable option for addressing contemporary security threats. The stakes are too high for political point-scoring and posturing.

Australia supports strong multilateral approaches to non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament; we always have, and we will continue to do so. Treaties such as the NPT and measures like Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) are fundamental to the norms of WMD non-proliferation and disarmament. At the recent summit, Australia participated in the Norwegian initiative to promote an outcome on non-proliferation and disarmament.

Yet the disappointments of this year have underscored the importance of pragmatic measures to complement broader multilateral efforts. For that reason, Australia, along with more than 60 other countries, is fully engaged in the Proliferation Security Initiative to disrupt and deter illicit WMD-related shipments. And, as Chair of the Australia Group — now in its twentieth year — we are working to ensure effective controls on chemical and biological agents in order to prevent their misuse.

There is an opportunity for the Committee to follow the example of such practical initiatives. Indeed, the adoption by consensus last year of resolution 59/90, on preventing the illicit transfer and use of man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS), showed that the Committee can respond to contemporary security concerns. We will reintroduce a draft resolution on MANPADS again this year.

As the Committee implements the reforms agreed upon last year, we should focus on practical efforts that we can make to strengthen international security. Australia has long advocated measures such as the Model Additional Protocol, a fissile material cut-off treaty and the Hague Code of Conduct as practical steps against the proliferation of WMD and their means of delivery. Last month in New York, as President of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) article XIV Conference, we showed our commitment to the entry into force of the CTBT. And we support international efforts — including adoption of a marking and tracing instrument and work towards an arms-trade treaty — to curb the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. I am delighted to hear so many other delegations refer to such efforts as well.

The Australian delegation will work constructively with you, Mr. Chairman, and with others in exploring these and other issues in the thematic debate. We hope that by doing so, we can help the Committee become a more effective vehicle for promoting practical measures to address emerging and existing threats to international security.

Ms. Fernando (Sri Lanka): I should like to express my delegation's sincere felicitations to you, Mr. Chairman, as a distinguished representative of Asia, and to the other members of the Bureau on your election. I assure you, Sir, of our full support as you continue the work of your predecessors to reinvigorate the First Committee through interactive debate aimed at reaching a more productive outcome. Following our tradition, let me also commend the officials of the Secretariat, Mr. Nobuyasu Abe, Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, and his teams in New York and Geneva for their invaluable dedication to the cause of multilateral disarmament, even in the face of a precarious financial situation.

On this sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, it is natural to recall the sombre global security situation in which the United Nations was born: the devastating world war that was unleashed in Europe and that concluded in Asia with equally horrifying results. The United Nations Charter was drafted and adopted before the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, the very first resolution adopted — unanimously — by the General Assembly at its first session, on 24 January 1946 — resolution 1 (I) — called for the elimination of all atomic weapons and all other major weapons adaptable to mass destruction.

Today, 60 years later, we have to ask ourselves why that early consensus on multilateral disarmament and arms control has now become so imperilled that no agreement was possible even on a few paragraphs for inclusion in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the September High-level Plenary Meeting. Secretary-General Kofi Annan was right to remind us that our biggest challenge and our biggest failing is our inability to agree on nuclear proliferation and disarmament.

We share the ultimate dismay of many at the inability of the May 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) to adopt concrete measures towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons. For too long now, the multilateral institutions of the Disarmament Commission and the Conference on Disarmament have remained at an impasse, unable to agree on a programme of work. The First Committee therefore bears a special responsibility to promote dialogue and constructive engagement and to build bridges towards the eventual return to multilateral negotiations in the great cause of disarmament.

Global terrorism remains one of the most persistent concerns of the heads of State or Government who addressed the High-level Plenary Meeting in September. My country, Sri Lanka, faces a

special challenge in dealing with a rebel group while engaged in a peace process. My President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, has called on the United Nations to promote mechanisms aimed at supporting States that are genuinely committed to democracy and peace processes and at sanctioning terrorist groups that undermine them. She has reminded the international community that failure to do so would only erode the credibility of peacemaking efforts and years of work to codify international legal and other measures against terrorism.

It was in that context that Sri Lanka welcomed the adoption of the Security Council resolution 1540 (2004) on weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and non-State actors. We submitted our first national report in May this year and will continue to work closely with the Committee established to monitor the implementation of that important resolution. In addition, we will soon be putting in place comprehensive national legislation to give effect to the Chemical Weapons Convention, to which Sri Lanka is a party.

Only two disarmament issues — those of landmines and small arms and light weapons — found reflection in the outcome document of the September High-level Plenary Meeting due to the existing humanitarian consensus.

Since the signing of the ceasefire agreement in February 2002, the Government of Sri Lanka has embarked on a comprehensive humanitarian mine-action programme with the broad objective of making Sri Lanka a mine-free country by 2006. An important first step was taken last year when Sri Lanka acceded to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), including its amended Protocols II, III and IV. A further step was taken in June this year when Sri Lanka submitted a report, on a voluntary basis, under article 7 of the Ottawa Convention on landmines. Those are some initial but significant steps taken towards achieving the ultimate objective of acceding to the Ottawa Convention, to which Sri Lanka is committed in principle.

While weapons of mass destruction and their proliferation pose a continuing threat to humankind, small arms pose the great threat to people in today's conflict and war zones. We therefore welcome the steady progress made this year on an instrument for the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons, moving towards the Review Conference in 2006. It has been our longstanding position that supplies of small arms and light weapons should be limited only to Governments or to duly authorized internationally recognized entities, in order to prevent their illicit transfer into the hands of terrorists or non-State actors.

Sri Lanka has been actively engaged in the national implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms since its adoption in 2001. A National Commission has been set up, and, as one of its initial undertakings, a national survey will be carried out this year that is intended to contribute to the formulation of a comprehensive National Plan of Action to deal with all aspects of the issue of the proliferation of illicit small arms in the country.

Sri Lanka has also submitted two reports at the last two biennial meetings of States on the implementation of the Programme of Action, in 2003 and 2005. In that connection, my delegation would like to extend its appreciation to the Department for Disarmament Affairs and to the Department of Economic and Social Affairs for their assistance. Later this year, Sri Lanka will host an international meeting on the issue of small arms transfers in collaboration with the Government of the United Kingdom.

In the Conference on Disarmament this year States continued to express support — and increasingly at the highest levels — for the role of the Conference as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum. Delegations to the Conference continued to work steadily to find a solution that would allow them to return to substantive work, while the majority of delegations once again expressed support for a comprehensive and balanced work programme based on the agenda.

My delegation was pleased to note that during the course of this year an increasing number of delegations have expressed support for the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee within the Conference on Disarmament on the issue of the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

Let me recall that, over the last several years, my delegation, together with the delegation of Egypt, has introduced in the First Committee a resolution on the prevention of an arms race in outer space calling for the recommencement of stalled negotiations and confidence-building measures on space security at the earliest possible time. The increased support that our

draft resolution has garnered over the years is a significant development. Recent initiatives taken by the Governments of Canada, Russia and China to further examine the issues of space security in Geneva on the sidelines of the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva have resulted in a closer examination of the international legal regime to protect the sanctity of space as a common heritage of humankind.

In keeping with the understanding in this Committee that general statements be reduced and focused, our intervention has been confined at this time to only a few priority areas. However, we look forward to participating actively in the interactive meetings on specific items of the programme of work.

Mrs. Asmady (Indonesia): Mr. Chairman, let me join others in extending our congratulations to you on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee, as well as to the other members of the Bureau.

The past year has witnessed a deepening crisis in our endeavours to effectively address issues relating to arms control, disarmament and international security. Narrow self-interests and exacerbated unilateralism have weakened multilateral forums, which were established specifically to deal with those issues.

My delegation shares the deep frustration over the failure of the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held last May, to adopt any substantive recommendations that would demonstrate a resounding commitment to the three pillars of the Treaty — non-proliferation, nuclear disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy. It has not escaped our attention that, for the first time in the history of the NPT, the Review Conference was bogged down from the start in wrangling over the agenda and the programme of work among its Main Committees.

These deeply disturbing developments were further compounded by the omission of any reference to non-proliferation and disarmament in the historic document adopted by the High-level Plenary Meeting held last month. My delegation shares the Secretary-General's characterization of such an omission as inexcusable and his view that weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger to us all.

It is noteworthy that at the recent United Nations summit, the nuclear-weapon States, as they did at the NPT Review Conference, rejected any reference in the summit document to disarmament obligations under the NPT. That opened the door for other States to jump into negotiations on the document with their own amendments and objections.

In the view of my delegation — which I think is the view of many Member States — those developments will make it more difficult to break the existing stalemate in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. Even worse, it has made it more difficult to persuade other States to foreclose their nuclear options as long as the nuclear-weapon States insist on maintaining and even improving theirs.

We should also add to that list of developments, which give rise to pessimism, our concern over the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament, divisiveness in the First Committee, and the impasse in the Disarmament Commission — all due primarily to a lack of political will, particularly on the part of the nuclear-weapon States.

Taken together, those developments have created a grave crisis in multilateral diplomacy on disarmament. Some time ago, the Secretary-General warned us about the rusting of the machinery for disarmament diplomacy and underlined the need for concerted efforts to bridge existing differences on key issues on the disarmament agenda under multilateral auspices. We should therefore continue our efforts to garner support and achieve a new consensus for further action on those vital issues.

In the process of confronting the challenges of insecurity and instability, Indonesia has begun the task of building cooperation across the Indian Ocean. The Asian-African Summit meeting, held in Jakarta last April, has formalized various channels for such cooperation. Its Strategic Partnership Declaration is pragmatic and forward-looking and will serve as a bridge between the two continents.

Of particular significance is the commitment of that Partnership to strive for multilateralism and a central role for the United Nations in global affairs. Thus, it highlights the importance of dialogue among nations to address issues of common concern such as armed conflict, transnational crime, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction.

Likewise, Indonesia joined the seven-nation ministerial declaration initiated by Norway (A/60/415, annex). It was clear that that initiative — which is the product of various regions and represents differing views — was intended to find a pragmatic way forward so as to break the present impasse with regard to global non-proliferation and disarmament efforts.

Against that backdrop, the problem of non-compliance with global arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation treaties has been most severe. The twin crises of non-compliance with obligations under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and the failure of nuclear-weapon States to take concrete, verifiable and irreversible steps to eliminate their arsenals have led to a crisis of confidence in the NPT regime.

No issue demonstrates the crisis surrounding the NPT so unambiguously as the fate of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban-Treaty (CTBT). Although it is approaching universality, with 176 signatories and 125 ratifications, the CTBT has continued to languish owing to the refusal of some nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Treaty. That is incompatible with the successful conclusion of the Fourth Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, held last month.

Negotiations without conditions on a verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty that focus attention on both existing stocks and the future production of weapon-usable materials — whether civilian or military — are very relevant. The urgency of stricter protection for fissile materials calls attention to the need for the successful conclusion of such negotiations without further delay.

As has been universally acknowledged, today's world remains imperilled by the threat resulting from the continued existence and unabated growth of nuclear arsenals. The only credible response to that threat is the total abolition of those arsenals. In that regard, security assurances against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons, in the framework of a legally binding international convention without conditions or loopholes, have become imperative.

With regard to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), we should endeavour to strengthen its role in helping developing countries to gain unimpeded and guaranteed access to nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. At the same time, we should ensure the non-diversion of nuclear materials and address the growing concern over the proliferation of nuclear materials and over the provision of assistance and technology through clandestine sources, as well as the widespread alarm at the possibility of nuclear terrorism and at the potential lowering of the nuclear threshold. In responding to those compelling realities, we call upon all States to further strengthen the Agency's integrated comprehensive safeguards system and to ensure greater adherence to their Additional Protocols.

As far as nuclear-weapon-free-zones are concerned, as a State party to the Bangkok Treaty, we will continue to seek adherence to its Protocol by nuclear-weapon States, whose cooperation, recognition and support with regard to the zone are essential prerequisites for ensuring its effectiveness. We remain hopeful that the outstanding issues will be resolved with a sense of urgency that will reinforce regional security, prevent proliferation and advance the cause of nuclear disarmament.

Sharing common objectives and aspirations, the entire southern hemisphere has become a vast nuclear-free zone, with more 100 States joined together — through regional treaties and their protocols — to ban nuclear weapons from their areas. In that context, my delegation is gratified to note that significant progress has been made by the five Central Asian States towards the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone. We hope that the ongoing endeavours will continue to be supported by the States concerned, leading to the strengthening of peace and security at both the regional and global levels. We also urge all parties directly concerned to seriously consider taking the practical and urgent steps required for the implementation of the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

With regard to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we are encouraged by the statement of principles signed last month during the six-party talks, which could lead to a diplomatic and peaceful solution, including that State rejoining the NPT and readmitting IAEA inspectors. My delegation has consistently taken the position that seeking a peaceful settlement to this complex problem through dialogue is an essential prerequisite for ensuring peace and stability in North-East Asia and for the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone on the Korean peninsula.

For a number of years, an overwhelming majority of Member States have voted in favour of the convening of a fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament (SSOD IV), for well-founded reasons. The only consensus document we have is the Final Document (resolution S-10/2) adopted at the first special session on disarmament, in 1978. Since that time, numerous international conferences on issues of global concern and interest have been held, and they have taken decisions that have paved the way for multilateral solutions. Disarmament has yet to find its place in that ongoing process.

In my delegation's view, the convening of SSOD IV is the only viable alternative to our collective predicament. It would offer invaluable opportunities for multilateral negotiations on arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation. It would hold enormous potential not only for the promotion of the disarmament agenda, but also for the review of the multilateral disarmament machinery.

Concerning the issue of small arms and light weapons, we welcome the adoption of a draft international instrument to regulate the marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons as an important achievement in our efforts to implement the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons. At the Second Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, held last July, it was clear that Member States had made significant progress at the national, regional and global levels in dealing with the scourge of that illicit trade and that they had recognized the need for further action to fulfil the commitments undertaken in the Programme of Action. We look forward to the First Review Conference on the Programme of Action, scheduled for next year, to address and follow up on a number of pertinent issues, especially the modalities for enhancing international cooperation.

Finally, it is now widely acknowledged that the First Committee should, as mandated by the provisions of resolution 59/95, carry out a rationalization of its methods of work to further facilitate its endeavours aimed at addressing disarmament and security issues. We agree that the Committee must take a closer look at its procedures so that this forum can be better structured to deal with those issues in a more constructive and inclusive manner. However, such an approach should include not only procedural aspects, but also substantive questions in the context of SSOD IV. That would ensure a comprehensive and long-term solution to disarmament and security issues under multilateral auspices.

Mr. Masood Khan (Pakistan): I congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee at the important sixtieth session of the General Assembly. I also take this opportunity to commend Ambassador Alfonso de Alba for his effective leadership of the Committee during the fifty-ninth session.

We associate ourselves with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

In my statement, I will touch on three cross-cutting themes: the global security environment, regional security and institutional challenges.

The global security architecture is in a state of flux. There are clear differences in terms of the perspectives, approaches and modalities of Member States in dealing with nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation.

We cannot gloss over the fact that negotiations on those issues broke down at the 2005 world summit, resulting in empty spaces in the summit's outcome document (resolution 60/1). The consensus underpinning disarmament and non-proliferation has eroded, and the multilateral disarmament machinery has been severely weakened. That opens the way for unilateral or discriminatory and coercive approaches.

The failure to achieve agreement on disarmament and non-proliferation at the summit reflects the deep differences among Member States and jeopardizes peace and stability, especially in regions of tension. It was against that backdrop that President General Pervez Musharraf, in his address to the General Assembly on 14 September, said that "we must evolve a new consensus to achieve disarmament and non-proliferation" (*A/60/PV.4, p. 19*). That must be promoted through consultations and agreement among all Member States, not just some self-selected Members, even if they mean well.

In building such a consensus, we cannot but start from the basic premise of the Charter that security is the right of every State. The Declaration of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to

disarmament (resolution S-10/2, part II) adopted the principle of equal security for all States. In our interdependent world, such security can best be promoted collectively, that is, multilaterally, not by national means or within restricted groups, regardless how powerful they are.

To promote genuine disarmament and non-proliferation, we must address the motives that drive States to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Those motives include perceived threats from superior conventional or non-conventional forces, the existence of disputes and conflicts with more powerful States and discrimination in the application of international norms and laws.

Of course, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) is dangerous. It can multiply the threat of the use of such weapons. But proliferation can be contained only if that containment is accompanied by a parallel effort to realize WMD disarmament. Discrimination and asymmetric possession of WMDs does not constitute a recipe for non-proliferation or regional or global stability. Nor are technology constraints a durable answer unless the motives for proliferation are addressed.

We must, of course, address the new threat of terrorists acquiring WMDs. That effort too can succeed only through collective and cooperative measures, not through coercion and discrimination.

A new security consensus should take into account the need to address existing and emerging global challenges to regional and international security. That goal can be achieved through the Conference on Disarmament or through a special session of the Disarmament Commission.

In the area of nuclear disarmament, it is essential that nuclear-weapon States take credible steps within a reasonable time frame to revalidate the bargain on disarmament and non-proliferation and restore a genuine balance between the two issues.

Although Pakistan subscribes to the objectives of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), it is a nuclear-weapon State. Pakistan is prepared to continue to act in consonance with the obligations undertaken by nuclear-weapon States under articles I, II and III of the NPT. But we cannot be expected to adhere to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State.

IAEA Director General Mohamed ElBaradei has called for the inclusion of the three non-NPT nuclear-weapon States in future talks on disarmament and non-proliferation. Such calls should be heeded. Universality is a noble objective, but it must respect existing realities.

Pakistan supports negotiations on a fissile material treaty in accordance with the Shannon mandate and the proposal made by the representatives of Algeria, Belgium, Chile, Colombia and Sweden — the five ambassadors' proposal — for a universal, non-discriminatory and internationally and effectively verifiable multilateral treaty.

We believe that there are no realistic prospects for a moratorium on fissile material production. In any event, a non-verifiable moratorium will neither enhance confidence nor advance the objective of a verifiable comprehensive fissile material treaty. Pakistan will halt fissile material production consistent with the requirements of its nuclear deterrence posture.

The security assurances offered by most nuclear-weapon States are restrictive, partial and qualified. Threats to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States in certain circumstances must be disavowed. What will enhance the security of the non-nuclear-weapon States are universal, unconditional and legally binding assurances.

We share the view that existing international legal instruments are inadequate to prevent the weaponization of outer space. China and Russia have done important work in that regard. We therefore support the five ambassadors' proposal to commence work on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in an ad hoc committee of the Conference on Disarmament.

We share the global concern about unbridled ballistic missile proliferation. To avert it, we call for enhanced efforts to conclude, within the United Nations system, a comprehensive, non-discriminatory and universally negotiated treaty covering all aspects of missiles.

The chemical weapons prohibition regime, overseen by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, is an example of the success of multilateralism. However, we must speed up the destruction of declared chemical weapons and address related environmental and safety concerns.

With respect to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, we should look to the future — to the 2006 Review Conference and beyond — to make renewed efforts to build a regime that can ensure compliance and verification by all Member States.

Pakistan's strategic programme is security-driven, not status-driven. Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons only after nuclear proliferation had happened in South Asia. Our strategic posture reflects restraint and responsibility. We maintain a credible minimum nuclear deterrence.

Pakistan has taken a series of measures to ensure responsible stewardship of our nuclear programme. In 2000, we created a national command authority with a strong military-civilian interface, which oversees and manages our strategic assets and nuclear programme. A reliable command and control system has been established. Custodial controls have been streamlined and strengthened. We have passed and enforced laws to strengthen export controls on nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Pakistan's Nuclear Regulatory Authority ensures the safe operation of civilian nuclear plants.

Resolute efforts should be made to defuse regional tensions and resolve conflicts in the Middle East. Pakistan supports the fulfilment of international obligations by all States and the objective of creating a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the Middle East.

All States must observe their treaty obligations. Pakistan is opposed to nuclear proliferation. However, every country has the right to develop technology for peaceful purposes. Pakistan is opposed to the use of force, which would further destabilize an already volatile region.

We welcome the progress achieved at the six-party talks aimed at ensuring a Korean peninsula free of nuclear weapons and at addressing the security concerns of all concerned States in North-East Asia.

In South Asia, Pakistan seeks to promote a strategic restraint regime with India consisting of three components: conflict resolution, nuclear and missile restraint and conventional balance. Since early 2003, we have maintained a multitrack engagement with India encompassing confidence-building measures and a composite dialogue. President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India, in their meeting in New York on 14 September, reiterated their commitment to ensuring a peaceful settlement of all pending issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, and agreed that possible options for a peacefully negotiated settlement should continue to be pursued in a sincere spirit and in a purposeful manner.

Since June 2004, Pakistan and India have held three rounds of consultations to elaborate nuclear and conventional confidence-building measures. Two days ago, on 3 October, Pakistan and India signed an agreement on advance notification of ballistic missile tests, during the Indian External Affairs Minister's visit to Islamabad.

In South Asia, we need a stable balance of conventional forces to ensure strategic stability between Pakistan and India. Massive introduction of sophisticated weaponry, including combat aircraft, aircraft carriers, airborne early warning and control systems, missile defence, nuclear submarines and warships will accentuate conventional asymmetries and compel greater reliance on nuclear and missile deterrence. There must be restraint in both demand and supply with respect to conventional weapons in South Asia. We agree with Under-Secretary-General Abe that the preponderant focus on the WMD threat should not lessen our attention to matters relating to regulation and reduction of conventional arms and armed forces.

The entire international community has an interest in ensuring strategic stability in South Asia at the lowest possible level and in averting an accelerated arms race in the region. Discriminatory approaches in the nuclear or conventional fields will not advance stability in South Asia. In the strategic and defence areas, Pakistan always demands and deserves parity of treatment with our neighbour.

The international community must seek to repair the erosion in the ability of its disarmament machinery to promote disarmament and non-proliferation. The First Committee, the Conference on Disarmament and the Disarmament Commission, among other bodies, provide internationally agreed multilateral forums to address issues of non-proliferation and disarmament. New initiatives that bypass the existing multilateral framework offer only temporary solutions on counter-proliferation, non-proliferation and non-compliance. Unequal and restricted Security Council action cannot supplant or circumvent multilateral negotiating processes. Unilateral restrictions and selective regimes will not promote security; they will exacerbate

insecurity. Elaboration of treaty regimes is no doubt an arduous exercise, but once treaties have been agreed freely they have a better chance of commanding adherence and compliance.

One definite way to move forward is to activate the Conference on Disarmament by breaking its chronic and by now unsustainable impasse. The deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament is political, not procedural. Therefore, it cannot be broken by semantics or by clever proposals for a programme of work. What we need is the political will to engage in substantive negotiations on all issues, not a quick fix to address only some of them.

This is a moment for reflection. We must not just lament our past and recent failures but must look to the future with the vision required to realize the goals of disarmament and non-proliferation in ways that enhance the security of all States and thus promote global peace and security.

As the steward of this important Committee, Mr. Chairman, you have a unique opportunity to evolve a new synthesis, a new consensus. During this very session, you could hold informal consultations to map out a collective future strategy. We assure you of our full support in such an endeavour.

Mr. Choisuren (Mongolia): It is indeed a pleasure to see the representative of a friendly country presiding over the work of the First Committee. I congratulate you, Mr. Chairman, and the other members of the Bureau on your well deserved election. I assure you of my delegation's full support and assistance in the discharge of your duties.

Mongolia fully aligns itself with the statement made by the representative of Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Let me join many previous speakers in expressing disappointment over the situation that we are confronted with today in multilateral disarmament and non-proliferation discussions. The paralysis that has afflicted the Conference on Disarmament for eight consecutive sessions, deadlock at the Disarmament Commission over the past two years, the unsuccessful seventh Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) and, last but not least, the complete failure to arrive at agreed language pertaining to disarmament and non-proliferation in the outcome document (resolution 60/1) of the September summit have dealt a heavy blow to international efforts in this field.

The present situation is completely unacceptable against the backdrop of soaring global military spending and the catastrophic scenario of the possible marriage between terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMDs).

The failure at the NPT Review Conference was thus particularly disappointing as it shut the door for another five long years on addressing and making headway on vital issues related to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. On the other hand the Review Conference vividly demonstrated the undiminished validity and centrality of the NPT as a cornerstone of the entire international arms control regime and the strong commitment of the world's nations to this vital instrument of international law. My country, guided by its internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free status and its longstanding and principled position as an advocate of nuclear disarmament, is committed to exert all efforts to contribute to the efforts to overcome the present impasse.

The mere existence of nuclear weapons represents a sword of Damocles over the head of mankind. We must get rid of these most inhumane and destructive weapons. The tragic legacy of Nagasaki and Hiroshima 60 years ago is a sobering reminder of their inanity and despicable cruelty. Retention and further development of something that can never be used, and if used would leave neither winners nor losers, is not only beyond comprehension but also serves as an invitation to further nuclear proliferation.

My President stated during the September world summit that "We need to build a safer world, in which ... deadly weapons do not fall into the wrong hands and technology is used for the betterment of human life" (*A/60/PV.5, p. 26*). The NPT is the right instrument to make this vision a reality. To do so, the Treaty ought to be implemented in its entirety.

The NPT has three pillars. Common sense dictates that each pillar has to be given equal importance or the whole structure runs the risk of collapsing. If we are to maintain and reinforce the credibility of the global non-proliferation regime, we cannot confine ourselves to the challenges confronting the non-proliferation provisions of the NPT. Disarmament and peaceful uses of nuclear energy must be given equal priority.

One of the key issues that have so far frustrated the full implementation of the NPT is the lack or insufficiency of progress on the part of nuclear-weapon States in complying with their disarmament obligations and commitments set forth in article VI of the NPT and the 13 disarmament steps agreed at the 2000 NPT Review Conference. In this regard, my country is convinced that more vigorous and irreversible implementation by nuclear-weapon States of their unequivocal commitment to nuclear disarmament would considerably bolster the motivation of non-nuclear-weapons States to adhere strictly to the provisions of the NPT. My delegation notes the completion of the deactivation of the entire force of 50 Peacekeeper intercontinental ballistic missiles by the United States. It, however, underscores the imperative that the principle of irreversibility must be applied to nuclear disarmament and to nuclear and other related arms control and reduction measures.

Nuclear-weapon-free zones are instrumental in strengthening the non-proliferation regime and achieving the objective of complete nuclear disarmament. My country reiterates its support for establishing such zones throughout the world. In that regard, the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories to Treaties That Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, held in Mexico from 26 to 28 April 2005, was an important contribution to endeavours to consolidate existing nuclear-weapon-free zones and promote the establishment of new ones. That Conference was also helpful in further strengthening Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status: the Tlatelolco Declaration proclaimed recognition and full support of Mongolia's international nuclear-weapon-free status.

Mongolia is pleased that the fourth round of six-party talks, held last month in Beijing, succeeded in adopting a joint statement reflecting the interests of the parties concerned. This augurs well for the future negotiations. The implementation of the commitments assumed by the parties will play an important role in achieving the goal of a denuclearized Korean peninsula and in strengthening peace and security in the region of North-East Asia.

My delegation underscores the inalienable right of non-nuclear-weapon States that have fully complied with their obligations under the NPT to participate in the fullest possible exchanges of equipment, materials and scientific and technological information for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Proof of compliance with a treaty regime is imperative for a country to enjoy fully the various privileges and rights conferred by the relevant legal instruments. The NPT is no exception.

In this context, there should be no doubt that only those States that are in full and verified compliance with their non-proliferation obligations are entitled to exercise the right to the peaceful use of nuclear energy. We must therefore seek to devise ways to control proliferation risks while ensuring that the inalienable right of States parties to the NPT to enjoy the benefits of the peaceful use of nuclear energy remains intact. An effective way to guarantee that and to prevent latent proliferation is through reinforcing the authority of the International Atomic Energy Agency by achieving universal adoption of an additional protocol, which, together with a comprehensive safeguards agreement, should rightly be recognized as a verification standard.

The fact that there are 176 signatories and 125 ratifications of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) testifies to its near universality and to the wide support it enjoys from an overwhelming majority of nations of the world. However, the Treaty is still far from fully operational, as no progress has been recorded since last year on ratifications by those remaining 11 States on whose ratification its entry into force depends. Let me reiterate here that continuing moratoriums on tests, though welcome, can never be a substitute for the legally binding prohibition enshrined in the Treaty.

The verification regime established under the CTBT is unparalleled in its global reach. My country is eager to further explore the possible benefits for disaster alert warning, including with respect to earthquakes and other calamities, offered by the International Monitoring System (IMS) in addition to its essential function of verification. Extensive use of data accumulated within the IMS for scientific and civilian purposes has real potential to assist in the development efforts of many countries.

Conclusion of a universal and verifiable fissile material cut-off treaty, an unconditional and legally binding instrument on security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon States and an international instrument on the prevention of an arms race in outer space should be pursued as a matter of the highest priority. Likewise, negotiating a verification protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention and achieving the

scheduled destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles under the Chemical Weapons Convention are further vital issues for the international community.

Mongolia denounces the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of all types of anti-personnel landmines and supports the efforts undertaken by the international community to ban those dangerous weapons, which are indiscriminate in their effects. My Government's programme of action 2004-2008 sets out the clear-cut objective of acceding to the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty on a step by step basis and revealing information on the number and types of its stockpiled landmines.

The state of affairs in international disarmament and non-proliferation does not leave room for complacency. As my Norwegian colleague Ambassador Løvald said in this Committee on Monday, 3 October, a new course in multilateral arms control diplomacy is achievable. My delegation, however, considers that this will not be an easy task. A search for new formulas should help breaking the current deadlock in the existing disarmament machinery and strengthening time-tested mechanisms. It is my conviction that this Main Committee, as the most democratic and representative international security and disarmament body, has a special role to play in this respect.

Mr. Savua (Fiji): Mr. Chairman, Fiji joins others in congratulating you and the other newly elected members of the Bureau. We look forward to working with other members of the Committee to address the challenging agenda before us. Disarmament issues are of critical concern to all nations, and we are hopeful that together we can make progress towards mitigating the threats and effects of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and conventional weapons.

My delegation also extends its deepest sympathy to Indonesia for the terrorist attacks in Bali last week. Such attacks, which take human lives and affect national economies, should not be tolerated. They further show that no country can be completely safe from these reprehensible acts.

The growing international recognition of the linkages among the issues of peace, security, governance, human affairs and development, as affirmed at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region last November, ought to be noted. The Declaration adopted at the First Summit of Heads of State and Government, held last year in Dar es Salaam, gave disarmament issues a high level of recognition, which has highlighted the impact that security and development intrinsically have upon each other. It is our hope that this recognition can be translated into a reduction in military budgets.

In developing nations, a high military budget has an adverse impact on development by diverting much-needed funds from internal infrastructure needs to the purchase of weapons and related military items. This is particularly acute during times of growing responsibilities and limited resources with which to meet these development requirements.

A careful balance must be struck between expenditures on security issues and other societal needs. The International Summit on Democracy, Terrorism and Security, held in Madrid this year, affirmed this by stressing the need to achieve the Millennium Development Goals by 2015 and by promoting this as an effective security strategy. Ameliorating some of the root factors of terrorism through effective economic and social policies, particularly in regard to developmental assistance and foreign aid packages, is a proactive approach. The value of such approaches cannot be stressed enough in the pursuit of security for all our nations.

Fiji commends the progress made so far at the international and regional levels towards conventional arms control as well as on assistance to States in curbing illicit trafficking in small arms. Last year, in Nadi, Fiji hosted the United Nations Regional Seminar on Small Arms and Light Weapons for the South Pacific. It was a continuation of our partnership within the Pacific Islands Forum to develop a common regional approach for weapons control, as described under the Nadi Framework. In this regard, we would like to acknowledge the financial, technical and human resources assistance provided by Australia, New Zealand and Japan.

The illicit manufacture of and trafficking in light weapons is of grave concern to our region. However, we cannot curb the practice alone. Aid to increase our capacity to control our borders effectively and to improve armoury security and management practices is needed. While much has been done, we cannot rest on our laurels. There is still much left to be done, and this requires increased multilateralism and the goodwill of all Member States.

Of importance to Fiji is the sustainability of the work of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific. The Asia-Pacific Centre has made much progress in addressing the disarmament and security concerns of our region, including commendable work on our small arms and light weapons initiatives. The Centre has also helped to coordinate a treaty creating a nuclear-free zone in the region. However, as noted by the Secretary-General, funding for the Centre has fallen critically short, and this has threatened both its effectiveness and its very survival. We welcome the efforts by the Department of Disarmament Affairs to assess the situation, and we hope that the First Committee will also be able to support solutions to bolster such an essential organization.

Fiji emphasizes the importance of other regional efforts, both in the Pacific and in other regions around the world. We are committed to remaining active members of the Pacific Island Forums, which has been tackling issues of concern to this Committee, on a regional basis. These issues include collective security, nuclear-free zones, the shipping and transport of radioactive materials and the coordination of weapons-control legislation.

Fiji believes that synergy should exist between the international and regional levels and that both are important forums in addressing security issues. Ideas, resources and strategies should be shared and should flow between all levels, so that we can learn from each other and yet maintain the flexibility to customize solutions to suit our national needs and situations.

On the question of nuclear disarmament, Fiji is also affected by fallout from nuclear testing in the Pacific region. Servicemen who participated in Operation Grapple Hook on Christmas Island in the 1950s are now, so many years later, suffering from diseases associated with their exposure. Children are born deformed, ageing is hastened and skin diseases are common. For some time, this group has been trying to solicit fair compensation for what they have suffered. Some money has been forthcoming, but it is our contention that this is insufficient to compensate them adequately and their families for their maladies. While this is not a Hiroshima or a Nagasaki, we believe it is sufficient reason for Fiji to join others and advocate complete nuclear disarmament.

Fiji remains committed to the ideals of the United Nations, including multilateral cooperation. We trust that our collective efforts here in the First Committee in the upcoming weeks will translate into laudable, yet achievable, goals and strategies as well as concrete commitments from Member States.

Mr. Sardenberg (Brazil): Please accept our congratulations, Sir, on your unanimous election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. Let me assure you of Brazil's full cooperation in what we hope will be a productive session.

My delegation associates itself with the views expressed by the representative of Argentina on behalf of the Rio Group as well as with the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition.

Brazil sees the pursuit of nuclear disarmament as a fundamental priority. We fully recognize the risks of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, yet we cannot disregard the importance of reducing and dismantling existing arsenals of all such weapons.

Together with non-proliferation efforts, we must continue to work tirelessly towards nuclear disarmament. To that end, our focus must be on systematic, continuous and progressive efforts to implement the obligations set forth in article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) on the basis of negotiations on effective disarmament. This, in a nutshell, will be the thrust of the New Agenda Coalition's draft resolution for the present session of the First Committee.

As a founding signatory to the Treaty of Tlatelolco, Brazil welcomes the celebration earlier this year of the First Conference of States Parties and Signatories of Treaties that Establish Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones. That is a development that certainly strengthens the international community's determination to continue working towards freeing the entire southern hemisphere of nuclear weapons. Together with New Zealand, Brazil will, thus, again be submitting a draft resolution on this issue.

At the most recent NPT Review Conference, Brazil sought to work on all substantive issues related to the Treaty's three pillars — nuclear disarmament, nuclear proliferation and the right to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes — success on which would facilitate the ultimate goal of a world free of

nuclear weapons. Regrettably, owing to a lack of the necessary political will from several quarters, it was impossible to discuss appropriately such issues and much less to agree on a substantive final document. We are, nevertheless, of the firm opinion that the next review conference and the preparatory process for it, which will begin in 2007, must undertake a through reassessment of the implementation of the 2000 NPT document, including the agreed 13 practical steps. We also call on those few remaining countries that remain outside the NPT to accede unconditionally to the Treaty as non-nuclear States.

Brazil has signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and has been supportive of the Treaty since the very beginning of multilateral discussions on that issue. As I stated during the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT two weeks ago, full and effective implementation will represent a significant step towards nuclear disarmament, as it will contribute to balance the inherent asymmetry of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. The CTBT is intended to be a bulwark against both vertical and horizontal proliferation by constraining the development and qualitative improvement of nuclear weapons and ending the development of advanced new types of weapons. It constitutes a crucial step towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. For that reason, Brazil calls upon all States, particularly those listed in annex 2, that so far have failed to sign and ratify the CTBT to do so without delay and to refrain from any activities contrary to the purposes of the Treaty and to the obligations laid out therein.

The declaration recently adopted by the Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, reaffirmed the parties' determination to bring the Treaty into force and underscored its importance for global disarmament and non-proliferation.

It is regrettable that the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting failed to reach agreement on matters relating to disarmament and non-proliferation. This lost opportunity further underscores the challenges to the nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation regime. The challenges imposed by those developments will not, however, lessen our determination to pursue the objective of achieving the goal of a world free from nuclear weapons.

Strengthening multilateralism is the only means of effectively tackling security concerns common to the whole of mankind. The continued lack of consensus on a programme of work of the Conference on Disarmament and the difficulty of arriving at an agreed agenda for the Disarmament Commission are unacceptable. With regard to the Conference on Disarmament, it is clear that a balanced programme of work must encompass the simultaneous establishment of four subsidiary bodies: on nuclear disarmament, our highest priority; on a fissile material treaty; on the prevention of an arms race in outer space; and on negative security assurances. Those four core issues cannot be evaded; nor can we pick and choose from among them, although negotiations and discussions on them should be dealt with on the basis of different time frames and perspectives.

Brazil concurs with the assessment that terrorism and the prospects of further proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are prominent among contemporary threats to international peace and security. One of the most terrifying possibilities is that non-State actors might acquire and use such weapons. We must endeavour to prevent this from ever happening, while acting strictly within accepted principles and norms of international law. No less challenging, however, is the lack of progress — even setbacks — in the field of disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament. As the Foreign Minister of Brazil, Mr. Celso Amorim, stated at the opening of the general debate at this session of the General Assembly,

> "We will continue to lend our support to increased international cooperation in the fight against terrorism and in the struggle to eliminate its deep-rooted causes.
>
> "Such efforts must be undertaken with due respect for international law and human rights. The fight against terrorism cannot be viewed in terms of police repression alone. Nor can such [acts] result in absurd and indiscriminate killing, like terrorism itself." (*A/60/PV.9, p. 6*)

Mr. Banze (Mozambique): Allow me, on behalf of my delegation, to congratulate you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of the Committee at its present session. I also extend my congratulations to the other members of the Bureau. I am confident that under your able guidance, we will manage to find a way forward as we discuss the pressing matters on the

Committee's agenda. I would like also to commend your predecessor, Ambassador Luis Alfonso de Alba, for the way he conducted the work of the Committee at the fifty-ninth session.

I express my Government's deepest condolences on the recent tragic terrorist attacks in Bali, Indonesia, which claimed many innocent lives and caused the destruction of property.

My delegation associates itself with the statements made by Indonesia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, by Nigeria on behalf of the African Group and by Botswana on behalf of the Southern African Development Community.

My delegation shares the concerns of the Secretary-General and others over successive failures: first, that of the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in May this year, and secondly, the failure of the recently concluded High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly to reach a meaningful conclusion on the issue of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. Lack of progress on that important issue is a matter of serious concern, given its profound implications for the overall stability of our planet, which is characterized by ever growing threats to international peace and security.

Thus, while we express our disappointment at such setbacks, it is our hope that goodwill will prevail so that there can be consensus on the steps needed to address those vital issues. We have managed to reach consensus on many other important issues on today's agenda; we strongly believe in the need to find common ground on this issue as well. We strongly believe that only through strict adherence to multilateralism and with the participation of all concerned can we succeed in building confidence among Member States and thus reduce the need to develop nuclear weapons.

My delegation shares the view that our approach to the NPT should be based on its three pillars: disarmament, non-proliferation and the right of all States parties to undertake research, production and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. Successful implementation of the relevant provisions of the NPT requires all nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States to shoulder their share of responsibilities in that regard in good faith.

Likewise, all States should commit themselves to ensuring the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) by acceding to and ratifying the Treaty. In the meantime, the moratorium on nuclear test explosions should be maintained. In addition, other international instruments related to weapons of mass destruction, including the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, must be universalized to ensure their effectiveness for international security.

My Government remains committed to the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Throughout the years, history has demonstrated that such weapons, due to their easy availability, are a continued, growing source of instability and crime and that they undermine the development efforts of many countries, in particular developing countries.

To deal with matters related to the prevention, combat and eradication of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, Mozambique has established a national commission on small arms, COPRECAL, which has been crucial in our efforts to curb that illicit trade. The Government has striven to ensure that COPRECAL can assume its role in curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Nevertheless, further financial and substantial technical assistance is needed to make COPRECAL fully operational. The establishment of a national action plan to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit manufacture, trade, trafficking and use of small arms and light weapons is among the ongoing actions requiring such assistance.

My Government wishes to express its determination to continue to support and complement the current efforts aimed at creating an international instrument to identify, mark and trace small arms and light weapons with respect to the illicit trade in such weapons. Similarly, we are committed to the Ottawa Convention on Anti-personnel Landmines, because we regard its implementation as the best way to free the world from those mines.

In that regard, we commend the successful outcome of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Nairobi in

November and December 2004. It made a timely contribution to strengthening implementation of the Convention. We commend the Government of Kenya for organizing the Conference.

In Mozambique, we are committed to developing efforts to minimize the effects of landmines through demining programmes and humanitarian assistance. From 1992 to 2004, our programme has resulted in the destruction of some 112,000 landmines, the dismantling of more than 130,000 of those insidious weapons and the clearing of some 228 million square metres throughout the country.

Although the situation has tangibly improved since the programme was launched, overall, anti-personnel landmines still pose a great danger to human life and to the social and economic development of our country. For instance, from 1996 through 2004, 427 landmine accidents were recorded, causing 655 victims, of which 246 died as a result of the injuries they sustained. Between January and August this year, eight incidents were reported, resulting in 18 casualties, including eight deaths.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all countries and organizations that have joined in my Government's efforts to free our country of landmines. I also take this opportunity to appeal for the international community's continued support in assisting Mozambique to create a domestic capacity for dealing with the humanitarian and economic dimensions of demining and for stockpile destruction so that we can conclude the process by 2009, as required by the Ottawa Convention. That will contribute not only to our people's security but also to a more complementary and comprehensive international development agenda, in particular for the developing countries.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming my Government's belief that the issues of disarmament and international security can best be addressed through close cooperation, multilateralism and consensus-building, taking into account the interests of all Member States. To that end, my delegation will spare no effort to attain those goals as we consider the Committee's agenda in the months ahead.

Mr. Yawo (Togo) (*spoke in French*): Before I discuss some of the concerns that we all share in this Organization, as well as our views on certain problems that still face the international community in disarmament and international security, I should like, on behalf of the delegation of Togo, warmly to congratulate you, Sir, and all the members of the Bureau on your election to preside over our Committee. My congratulations also go to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs on his very detailed and instructive opening remarks, as well as for the various reports and notes before the Committee.

My delegation endorses the statements made by the representative of Indonesia, speaking on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, and by the representative of Nigeria, speaking on behalf of the African Group.

One essential task of the United Nations since its inception has been the maintenance of international peace and security and the promotion of the economic and social development of Member States. Sixty years after the Organization's founders made that commitment, reaffirmed at the summits in 2000 and 2005, peoples throughout the international community who wish to live in a world of concord, peace and solidarity continue to see reality fall far short of their expectations. The international community has never stopped striving to attain the noble goals and principles of the United Nations, and yet it has not fully managed to make them a reality. In other words, the quest for peace and peacebuilding through complete disarmament remains at the heart of our concerns.

The disquiet surrounding that issue continues to grow, given the understanding that nothing significant is being done about the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Indeed, the Secretary-General has quite rightly exhorted Member States to demonstrate greater resolve in addressing that issue and notes in his report that

> "[i]n May the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons failed to reach agreement on any substantive issues. The opportunity was missed to address the most pressing problems of not only the nuclear non-proliferation regime, but also of international security more broadly." (*A/60/1, para. 76*)

Disarmament and non-proliferation continue to be matters of concern to our world, notwithstanding the relevant existing legal instruments designed to help us eliminate weapons of mass destruction, small arms and light weapons. It is unfortunate indeed that the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-

Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), held in New York in May 2005, proved to be a manifest failure. One way or another, we must relaunch debate in order to arrive at an agreement acceptable to all.

Togo therefore unreservedly supports all concrete measures taken by the United Nations and other entities to attain the goals of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, along with the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The issue of small arms and light weapons, which is equally critical in many parts of our planet, and in Africa in particular, deserves special attention by dint of the devastation wrought by those weapons on populations. It is to be hoped that the second United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, scheduled to be held in July 2006, will allow us to intensify the fight against the stockpiling and destabilizing proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

The Assembly's forthcoming adoption of a draft international instrument to enable States rapidly and reliably to identify and trace small arms and light weapons will also mark a noteworthy advance in that regard. My delegation wishes particularly to stress the point that the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms are sources of great alarm to the international community in general and to Africa in particular, where the phenomenon is fuelled by armed conflict and social and political crises. Belligerents and ex-combatants become armed bands that now only sow terror and desolation among peaceful people, but destabilize our countries and undermine the foundations of our societies. Consequently, we are seeing a ubiquitous and chronic rise in cross-border crime, armed robbery and roadblocks, with their concomitant toll in human lives.

Faced with that situation, the subregions of our continent are organizing themselves. Initiatives are under way within the Economic Community of West African States. Of the many structures being established to eradicate the scourge, I shall limit myself to citing the Programme for Coordination and Assistance for Security and Development in Africa, the essential mission of which is the coordination of all priority steps to attain the moratorium goals.

In the context of monitoring small arms and light weapons, we also note the role played by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. My country hosts the Centre and does its best to assist in its functions. We welcome the Centre's work, in conjunction with African subregional organizations, in fighting the proliferation of and illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. We therefore hope that the Centre will be provided with sufficient financial, human and material resources to enable it to respond favourably to the many requests it receives. I hereby thank the donors for the many ways in which they are helping the Centre in its tasks. I also stress that the Centre's current chronic financial difficulties cannot be solved simply by moving it elsewhere.

We welcome the commitment undertaken by our countries to maintaining peace and security themselves and to preventing, managing and peacefully settling crises and conflicts. Even so, it must be noted that our countries cannot effectively meet the challenge of peace and stability unless their partners support them and remain sensitive to their concerns and ready to provide appropriate assistance. The delegation of Togo therefore wishes to stress the need for cooperation between the international community and our countries, as well as complementarity in our initiatives to maintain peace and security.

We cannot overemphasize the fact that the injustice arising from the unequal distribution of our planet's wealth is the primary cause of the many crises and wars hindering the development of harmonious relations among States. There is undoubtedly an intrinsic nexus between peace and justice, and between peace and development. Peace and security will be in ongoing jeopardy so long as just measures are not taken to push back the frontiers of poverty and want that weaken the foundations of our societies.

The Secretary-General emphasizes in his report that "[e]stimated global military expenditures exceeded $1 trillion in 2004 and were projected to keep rising" (ibid., para. 79). Mindful of the immense development difficulties the world is facing, it is highly desirable that efforts be made to reverse the upward trend in those expenditures in favour of investments to achieve sustainable development.

We express the hope that this session will see a further commitment by our countries to freeing greater resources for the promotion of development and for

making our common Organization a special instrument for coherence and rapprochement among peoples. We wish every measure of success for our work and hope that this debate will contribute to building a world of peace and solidarity.

Ms. Panckhurst (New Zealand): We are very pleased to see you, Sir, in the role of Chairman of the First Committee. Let me assure you of New Zealand's support as you take the work of the Committee forward.

The past year has been a difficult one. At a time when progress on disarmament and non-proliferation objectives is more important than ever, we have lost three significant opportunities — the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the High-level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly, and in the Conference on Disarmament — to work together as a global community to improve the international security situation.

New Zealand was extremely disappointed that the NPT Review Conference was unable to agree a substantive outcome and that so much of the time available for discussion on concerted strengthening and implementation of the Treaty was consumed by wrangling over questions of procedure. The Treaty's status as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation was reaffirmed by many States at the Review Conference, but clearly we need to find new ways of working together to achieve its implementation. Commitments agreed by consensus under previous review conferences of the Treaty, particularly the 13 practical steps and the unequivocal undertaking to eliminate nuclear arsenals, are outstanding and must be acted upon. Creating a world safe from the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons is in all our interests.

Nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation are mutually reinforcing processes. As noted in the statement made by the representative of South Africa on behalf of the New Agenda Coalition, which includes New Zealand, we remain convinced that positive progress on nuclear disarmament would improve global security with respect to proliferation.

New Zealand was therefore deeply concerned at the failure of the high-level summit to agree any language on disarmament and non-proliferation. That gives a misleading message about the ongoing importance of addressing those critical issues at the highest possible level within an international framework. We commend the seven nations, led by Norway, that made such efforts to gain agreement on a meaningful statement on disarmament and non-proliferation for our leaders.

The third lost opportunity is represented by the continuing failure of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work. It has now been eight years since the Conference was able to undertake any substantive negotiations. The longer the impasse continues, the more irrelevant the Conference will render itself in international mechanisms. The willingness of some States to use rules of procedure as a means to prevent progress going forward continues to be of concern. The difficulties that confront the Conference on Disarmament are not the result of inadequacies in the scope or currency of its agenda. If there were a political willingness to agree on the elements of a programme of work, the agenda would almost certainly be treated as flexible enough to accommodate it. During New Zealand's presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, we conducted extensive bilateral consultations, which revealed that the overwhelming majority of member States were ready to get down to work. We urge those States withholding consent to the commencement of negotiations to approach discussions on the work programme with a renewed degree of flexibility.

Despite New Zealand's deep regret at the wasted potential for progress at the multilateral level, we have continued our work on disarmament and non-proliferation objectives where possible. We have committed a further $3 million over the next four years to the G-8 Global Partnership against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction to help safeguard and destroy the unsecured legacies of weapons of mass destruction in the former Soviet Union.

New Zealand has already contributed $1.2 million towards the destruction of chemical weapons. That is a tangible demonstration of our support for the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction, a multilateral disarmament treaty that applies equally to all parties and is verifiably and irreversibly eliminating weapons of mass destruction.

The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction still lacks any verification mechanism. That remains a major hole in multilateral defences at a time when biological weapons have been identified as a growing threat. We hope that the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention will provide an opportunity next year to consider how to address that issue.

At last month's Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, we emphasized New Zealand's continued strong commitment to the Treaty and its early entry into force. We will continue to work to achieve that objective.

We commend the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and Director General ElBaradei for their continuing work in verifying that nuclear energy programmes are for peaceful uses. We support the Director General's call for States to allow the Agency more stringent verification measures.

We call on Iran to put in place full transparency and cooperation with the IAEA, to respect all its commitments and to continue negotiations on long-term arrangements.

We welcome the outcome of the recent six-party talks in Beijing and the commitment of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to abandoning all nuclear weapons and existing nuclear programmes and to returning at an early date to the NPT and to IAEA safeguards.

Progress on conventional weapons has been more encouraging over the past year. The States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction held a successful first Review Conference and agreed an action plan which will guide them through the next phase of implementation, particularly as the first set of deadlines for mine eradication and destruction approaches in 2009.

The threat posed to peace and security by the excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of illicit small arms and light weapons remains a significant challenge. At the same time, we are encouraged by the international community's progress in strengthening controls, as evidenced by the entry into force of the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and the adoption of the marking and tracing instrument earlier this year. New Zealand will continue to work closely with the countries in our region. We look forward to a successful outcome of the 2006 review of the programme of action.

In conclusion, New Zealand believes that it is now more important than ever for us to work towards strengthened multilateral, legally binding instruments, with verification provisions that are as strong as necessary to give the confidence that will finally allow us to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from our world. In our view, the most important moves that we could make collectively — for both disarmament and non-proliferation — would be to ensure compliance with the NPT in all its aspects, to bring the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty into force, and to negotiate a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The meeting rose at 12.30 p.m.